●近代麻雀コミックス●

福本伸行

FUKUMOTO NOBUYUKI

4

天

TEN

TENHOU TSUUSHIN KAIDANJI

天和通りの快男児

THE NICE GUY ON THE WAY OF TENHOU

Kindai Mahjong Comics

竹書房

TAKE SHOBO

天
CHAPTER 30
SAN-SHOKU
GINJI

STUDIO ALTA
日本信販
AOKI

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, TEN?
SO

カタッ

WE'LL HAVE TO DIG UP SOME NEW RECRUITS.
ANOTHER FIVE PEOPLE.
SINCE WE CAN'T COUNT ON THE CURRENT REP PLAYERS FROM TOKYO THIS TIME

YOU AND KEN ARE THE ONLY MEMBERS REPRESENTING EAST
NOW THAT WE'VE LET HIROYUKI GO

I CAN THINK OF A FEW.

キュ
WE CAN'T GET FIVE, BUT

FIRST, THERE ARE TWO STRONG PLAYERS WE CAN'T OVERLOOK THAT CAN BE MEMBERS OF EAST.....!
LET'S SPLIT UP.
COFFEE SET
TEN DAYS UNTIL THE EAST-WEST SHOWDOWN IS CUTTING IT CLOSE
IT'S JUST
THE HEAD PRIEST OF KIYOHIRO TEMPLE, THE TEMPLE OF MAHJONG IN TOHOKU, KANAMITSU SHUUZOU .....!
THE BEST PLAYER IN HOKKAIDO, WASHIO HITOSHI

I WANT TO DO WHATEVER IT'LL TAKE TO BRING THEM INTO THE EAST CAMP...
THERE'S A CHANCE THEY MIGHT NOT AGREE BUT

I'LL BE IN TOKYO
WHILE YOU'RE UP NORTH PERSUADING THOSE TWO
IF WE HAVE THOSE TWO, IT'LL BE ENOUGH TO RESIST THEM...
AGAINST THE TOP-CLASS PLAYERS THAT WEST HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER

LOOKING FOR AKAGI SHIGERU ...!

IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT...
IN AKAGI'S CASE, I'VE HAD HIM IN MIND FOR A WHILE
WE HAVE TO GET THAT GENIUS ONTO EAST'S SIDE
AND THERE'S ONE MORE.
AND SINCE HE'S BEEN MISSING
カタッ...
...HE WAS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE BEST PLAYER I WENT UP AGAINST WHEN I WAS YOUNG.
IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO, AND I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE'S LIVING NOW. BUT...
THE OLD MAN CALLED GINJI...
THE MASTER OF SAN-SHOKU
I CAN STILL VIVIDLY REMEMBER HIS GODLIKE PLAYING ABILITY.

BUT THERE'S BASICALLY NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT OUR NUMBERS
OUR AGREEMENT WITH WEST IS FOR SEVEN PEOPLE
WE KNOW WE'RE GOING TO BE AT A DISAD-VANTAGE THERE
THOSE ARE PROBABLY THE BEST PLAYERS IN THE EAST I CAN THINK OF
KEN AND I, AKAGI SHIGERU, WASHIO FROM HOKKAIDO AND KANAMITSU FROM TOHOKU
SO BETWEEN THAT GINJI
SEE YOU THEN
LET'S MEET UP AT YOUR PLACE IN A WEEK, SAWADA.
THEN
YEAH
LET'S GO WITH THESE SIX...
WE'LL GET THE BEST SIX PEOPLE TOGETHER!

AND THEN
I SPLIT UP FROM SAWADA AND KEN.
カラン
THREE DAYS LATER
喫茶 あもん
SHIT
THAT JERK, AKAGI WHERE'D HE RUN OFF TO!

AND AT A TIME LIKE THIS...
OH GOD
IS HE OUT OF THE COUNTRY?
I LOOKED EVERYWHERE I COULD THINK OF, AND HE'S NOT AROUND.

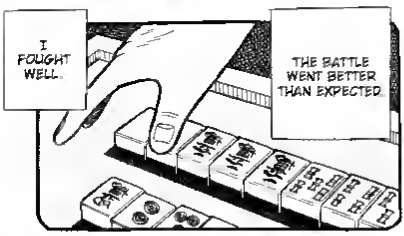
I HAVE TO AT LEAST FIND OLD MAN GINJI.....
IF HE IS

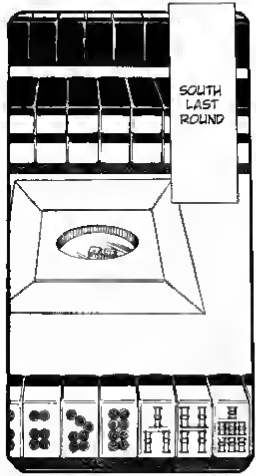
TRULY WAS A SKILL WORTHY OF THE GODS.....
THAT SAN-SHOKU.....
BACK THEN, HE WAS ALREADY CLOSE TO SIXTY...
ASAI GINJI

TEN YEARS AGO
IT WAS BACK WHEN I WAS STALKING THE SHINJUKU AREA...
THERE WASN'T ANYONE FOR ME TO BEAT AT THE 10 OR 20-POINT MAHJONG PARLORS AND I WAS FEELING PRETTY GOOD ABOUT MYSELF.
THAT WAS WHEN I MET ASAI GINJI, KNOWN AS SAN-SHOKU GINJI
麻雀荘 和

I CHALLENGED GINJI
WITHOUT LOOKING AT WHO WAS IN FRONT OF ME

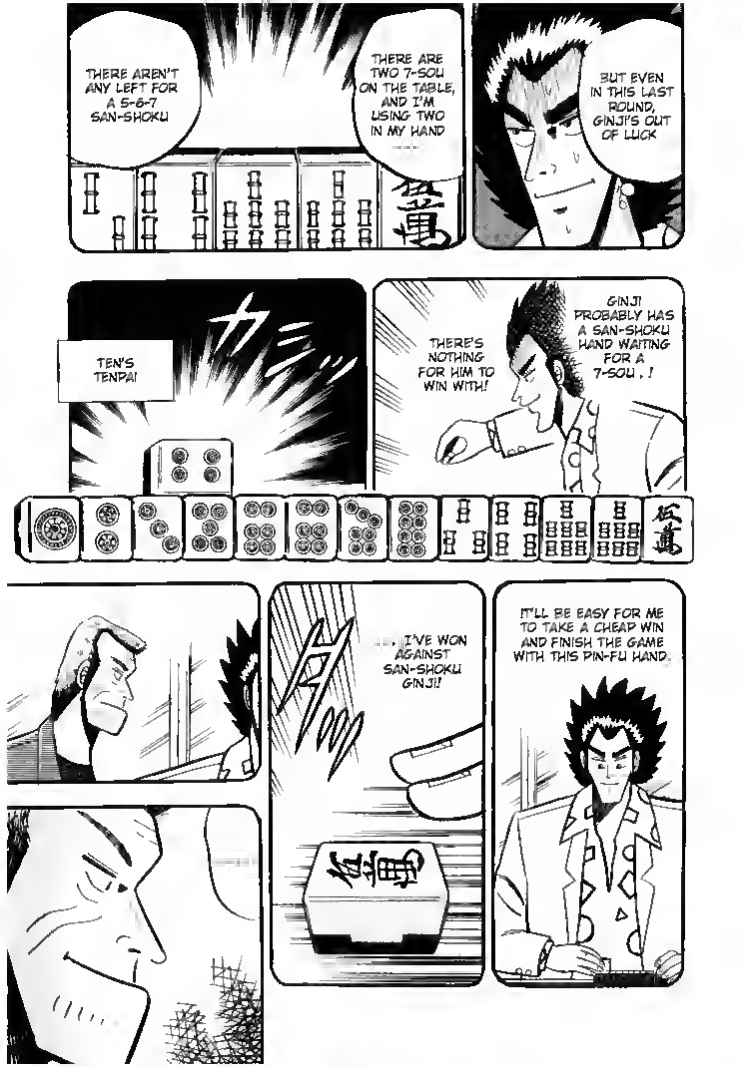
HE'D REALLY MADE A NAME FOR HIMSELF!
BACK THEN, THEY SAID GINJI WAS THE BEST IN TOKYO


I FOUGHT WELL...
THE BATTLE WENT BETTER THAN EXPECTED

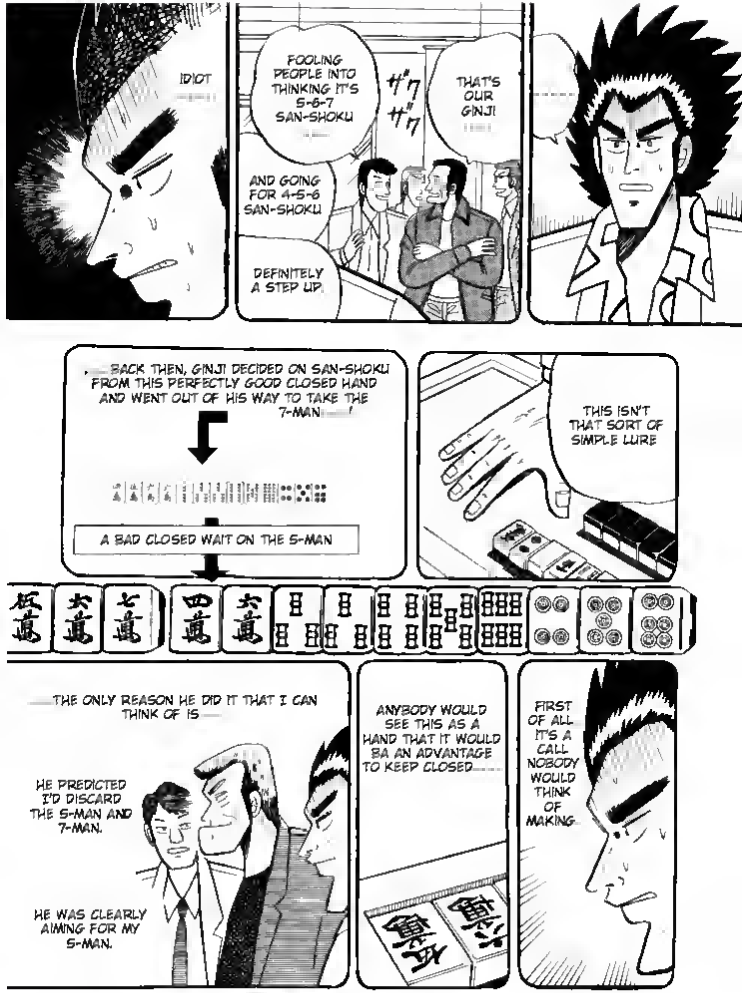

SOUTH LAST ROUND

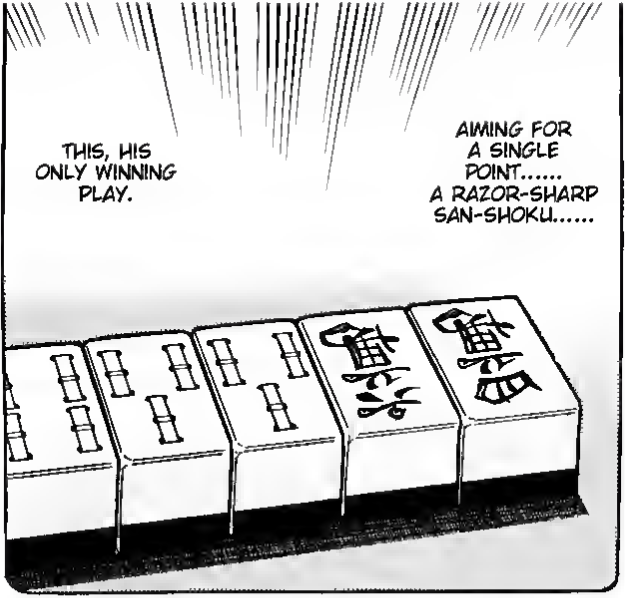
I WAS ACTUALLY IN THE LEAD, ABOVE GINJI BY TEN THOUSAND POINTS
JUST BEFORE THE END OF THAT HAN-CHAN

CHII!
8TH TURN
GINJI'S PROBABLY IN TENPAI NOW
TAKING THAT FOR 5-6-7, HUH. .
THE DIFFERENCE IN POINTS BETWEEN US IS 10 000
SINCE HE OPENED HIS HAND,
EVEN TWO DORA WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH. HE HAS TO GET THAT SAN-SHOKU HAND TOO.
SIMPLY PUT, FOR GINJI, HE WOULDN'T HAVE JUST TAN-YAO
IT'S OBVIOUSLY CONNECTED TO A SAN-SHOKU. .
FROM LOOKING AT THE DISCARDS HE'S REVEALED
GINJI'S DISCARDS
HE'S AIMING FOR TAN-YAO AND SAN-SHOKU ON THE 5-6-7.


THERE AREN'T ANY LEFT FOR A 5-6-7 SAN-SHOKU
THERE ARE TWO 7-SOU ON THE TABLE, AND I'M USING TWO IN MY HAND
BUT EVEN IN THIS LAST ROUND, GINJI'S OUT OF LUCK
TEN'S TENPAI!
THERE'S NOTHING FOR HIM TO WIN WITH!
GINJI PROBABLY HAS A SAN-SHOKU HAND WAITING FOR A 7-SOU...!
IT'LL BE EASY FOR ME TO TAKE A CHEAP WIN AND FINISH THE GAME WITH THIS PIN-FU HAND.
...I'VE WON AGAINST SAN-SHOKU GINJI!

THAT'S THE ONE.
URGH.
A NEAT COMEBACK VICTORY WITH A MANGAN HAND.....
HEH HEH HEH...
YOUNG FELLA...
4-5-6 SAN-SHOKU WITH A CLOSED WAIT ON THE 5-MAN.....!


IDIOT
FOOLING PEOPLE INTO THINKING IT'S 5-6-7 SAN-SHOKU
AND GOING FOR 4-5-6 SAN-SHOKU
DEFINITELY A STEP UP.
THAT'S OUR GINJI
BACK THEN, GINJI DECIDED ON SAN-SHOKU FROM THIS PERFECTLY GOOD CLOSED HAND AND WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO TAKE THE 7-MAN.
A BAD CLOSED WAIT ON THE 5-MAN
THIS ISN'T THAT SORT OF SIMPLE LURE
THE ONLY REASON HE DID IT THAT I CAN THINK OF IS
HE PREDICTED I'D DISCARD THE 5-MAN AND 7-MAN.
HE WAS CLEARLY AIMING FOR MY 5-MAN.
ANYBODY WOULD SEE THIS AS A HAND THAT IT WOULD BA AN ADVANTAGE TO KEEP CLOSED.
FIRST OF ALL IT'S A CALL NOBODY WOULD THINK OF MAKING


THIS, HIS ONLY WINNING PLAY.
AIMING FOR A SINGLE POINT..... A RAZOR-SHARP SAN-SHOKU.....

GINJI'S FAVORITE TRICK! THE SKILL HE USES TO WIN!
IT'S NO COINCIDENCE.....! THIS SHARP ONE-POINT SAN-SHOKU IS

IT WASN'T JUST ONCE OR TWICE FROM GINJI, BACK THEN

CASINO

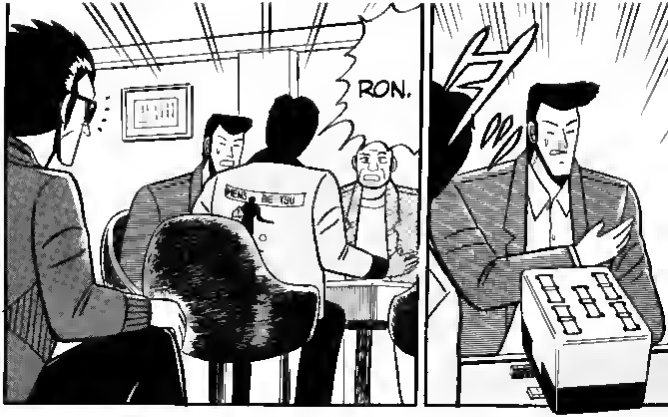
ザワ ザワ…

雀荘 大海
TEL03-3○○-4154

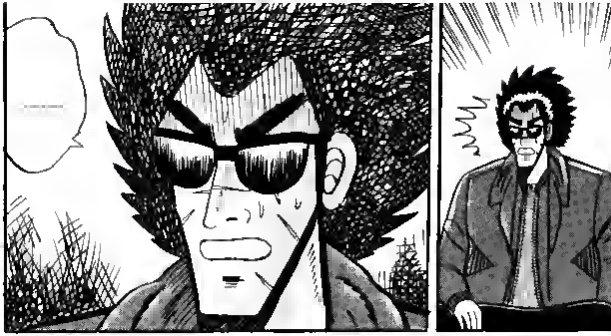
……

IT'S... NOT LIKE I DON'T HAVE A STRATEGY AGAINST IT NOW...
BACK THEN...
IT WAS A SKILL BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING, BUT...
I WANT TO BE SURE .....!
AKAGI-CLASS FIGHTING ABILITIES
HE'S SEVERAL STEPS ABOVE THE ORDINARY REP PLAYER...
AND THEN, IF GINJI ISN'T USING SOME CHEAP TRICK AND IT'S THE REAL THING

I CAN'T EVEN FIND HIM. SO I GUESS IT'S NOT GONNA HAPPEN
BUT, WELL
CHII!
MEN'S
CALLING FOR S-6-7, HUH


RON.

MANGAN .....!
TAN-YAO, SAN-SHOKU, 2 DORA...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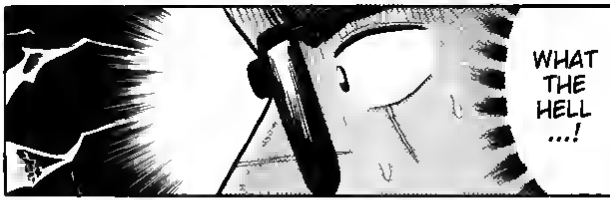
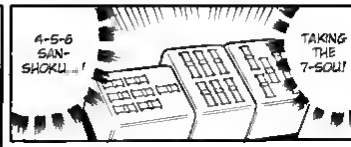
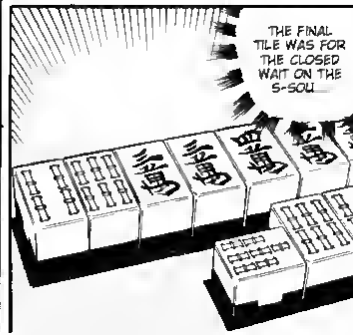

WHAT THE HELL ...!

THE PICTURE-PERFECT IMAGE OF IT
THIS IS SAN-SHOKU GINJI'S STYLE OF PLAYING


4-5-6 SAN-SHOKU...!
TAKING THE 7-SOU!


THE FINAL TILE WAS FOR THE CLOSED WAIT ON THE 5-SOU...

THAT SAN-SHOKU...
THAT KID...

COULD IT BE

SEEYA

WAS THAT ON PUR-POSE ?

THAT'S CRAZY...!
NO...
I MADE A MISTAKE. I GUESS
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THE KID'S ONLY AROUND 20..... IT HAS TO BE A PRODUCT OF COINCIDENCE

GINJI!

CHAPTER 31
SUPER
SENSES

FINALLY, I'D FOUND GINJI
ON MY FOURTH DAY WANDERING CENTRAL SHINJUKU
I WANTED TO BE TOLD IF HE SHOWED UP
QUICKLY, I TALKED TO ALL THE MAHJONG PARLORS IN THE AREA HE LIVED, AND SET MY TRAP
I TRACED HIM BACK TO LIVING IN AN APARTMENT NEARBY
MEANWHILE, I WAITED AT A NEARBY CAFE

麻雀王
麻雀
お一人様でも
お気軽にどうぞ！
TEL-03-411 63XX
THREE DAYS LATER
THE MAHJONG PARLOR EMPLOYEES MADE WAY FOR ME
GINJI APPEARED
AND NATURALLY I GOT TO THE SAME TABLE AS GINJI WAS AT

SO IF THAT'S THE ONLY ABILITY HE HAS
HE CAN'T EXACTLY GO UP AGANST TOP UNDERWORLD PLAYERS
I'M PRETTY CERTAIN
HOW HE DOES IT I DON'T KNOW, BUT
PROBABLY THAT'S WHO SAN-SHOKU GINJI REALLY IS...
A FAMOUS PLAYER WITH THE HANDICAP THAT HE CAN ONLY EXERT HIS ABILITIES IN MAHJONG PARLORS USING THE MARKED TILES
GANPAI.....!
(THE TRICK OF USING MARKED TILES)
AT THE TIME, I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE AT WINNING...
WHEN I SAT AROUND THE TABLE LIKE THIS WITH GINJI
THAT SAN-SHOKU TRICK OF HIS
CAN ONLY BE ONE THING
BUT... IT'S DIFFER-ENT NOW...
WHEN I THINK BACK TO TEN YEARS AGO

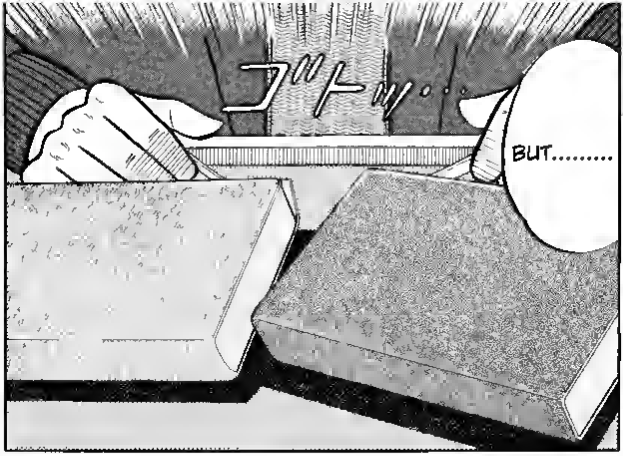
FOR 500,000
WELL
HOW ABOUT PLAYING A SASHI-UMA GAME WITH ME...?
I DON'T MIND, BUT...
OLD FELLA

...
HUH...?

AND HOW ABOUT IF YOU GOT PAID THAT MUCH...?

HEH HEH
THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY FOR A MAHJONG PARLOR WHERE PEOPLE ARE JUST PLAYING AROUND LIKE THIS ONE...
FOR AN OLD FELLA LIKE ME, THAT'S ENOUGH MONEY TO MAKE MY HEAD SPIN.

YOU SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF GUY THAT'D PICK UP THAT MUCH IF SOMEONE DROPPED IT...


ゴトッ…
BUT.....

I BET THERE'S NO WAY YOU'LL LOSE WITH THAT SAN-SHOKU YOU'RE SO GOOD AT.
YOU DON'T MIND, RIGHT?

SO LET'S USE SOME FRESH TILES
I DUNNO, I COULD HAVE SOME KIND OF TRICK PLAYED ON ME IN THIS MAHJONG PARLOR.....

I'LL ACCEPT...

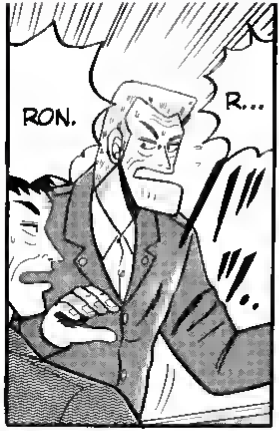
I SUPPOSE I CAN'T PULL OUT NOW
IN THAT CASE...

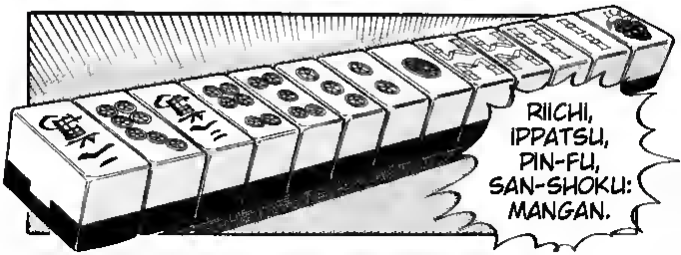
YOU REMEMBER SOME STUFF FROM A LONG TIME AGO, BUDDY...

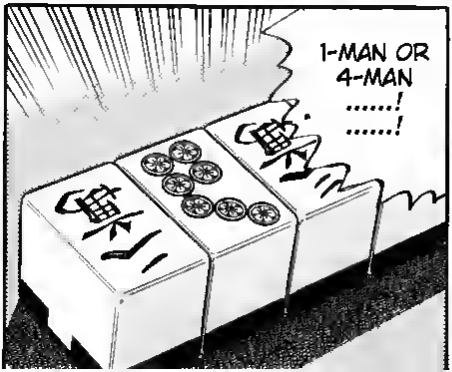
FIRSTLY, HE SHOLD BE DEFENSE-LESS IN THE FIRST HAN-CHAN...
IF WE USE NEW TILES
IF GINJI'S WEAPON IS GANPAI, AS I SUSPECT IT IS
ガチャ...
ガヲ
I'LL CHECK THAT OUT...!
FIRST OFF, THAT STYLE OF PLAYING...! IS IT REAL ABILITY, OR IS IT A TRICK...
AT THE VERY LEAST, GINJI'S SUPERHUMAN PLAYING STYLE WILL BE CONCEALED IN SHADOW...!
BUT IN THE EAST 3RD ROUND
AS TEN EXPECTED THE EAST 1ST AND 2ND ROUNDS PASSED WITHOUT ANYTHING STRANGE

TEN'S TENPAI IN A CLOSED WAIT ON THE 3-MAN
.....
8TH TURN
GINJI'S HAND
GINJI'S DISCARDS

KOTEGAESHI
(CHANGING THE TILES IN YOUR HAND VERY QUICKLY)
RIICHI.


RON.
R...

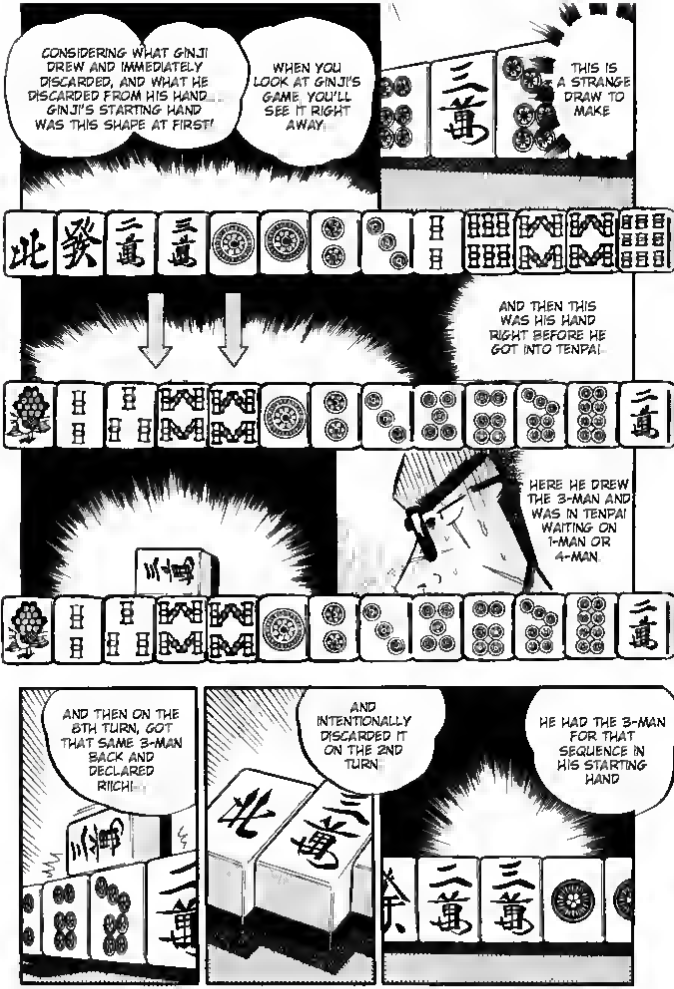

RIICHI,
IPPATSU,
PIN-FU,
SAN-SHOKU:
MANGAN.


1-MAN OR
4-MAN
.....!
.....!

THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE, OLD FELLA.
HEH HEH
FROM 2-3-3, YOU DROPPED THE 3 AHEAD OF TIME...!
I THOUGHT THE 1-MAN BELOW IT WOULD BE SAFE
AFTER YOU GOT RID OF THE 3-MAN SO EARLY...
TEN, WASN'T IT?
OH, RIGHT RIGHT
THIS IS JUST A BASIC SKILL, ISN'T IT?
ISN'T THAT RIGHT... YOU OVER THERE
WHAT WAS IT YOUR NAME WAS AGAIN?
IT'S A WELL-USED TRICK, SINCE THE 1-MAN GETS DISCARDED A LOT.
HIS CUTESY STYLE OF PLAYING NOW...!
SO THAT'S
HE'S ACTING LIKE IT WAS NOTHING.

TO CASUALLY NOT STAND OUT...
HIS STYLE OF PLAYING NOW IS...
ガヲッ..
I JUST REMEMBERED SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO...
SORRY, BUT
HIS GODLIKE SKILL HASN'T WAVERED
HANG ON
HUH...? WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
I'LL BE GONE FOR HALF AN HOUR
HUH?
WAIT HERE...

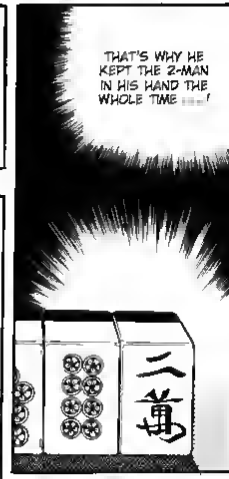
HE'S NOT JUST SOME PUNK.
HE CAME TO PLAY ME OUT OF CURIOSITY OR ON SOME WHIM
...I SEE...
LIKE I FIGURED, HE'S GOT GOOD EYES...
IN OTHER WORDS
I'M SURE IT WAS THE THIRD TILE FROM THE RIGHT THAT HE DREW JUST BEFORE HE DECLARED RIICH!
GINJI DID A QUICK SLIGHT-OF-HAND TRICK WITH THE KOTEGAESHI BUT
THE 3-MAN!


CONSIDERING WHAT GINJI DREW AND IMMEDIATELY DISCARDED, AND WHAT HE DISCARDED FROM HIS HAND... GINJI'S STARTING HAND WAS THIS SHAPE AT FIRST!
WHEN YOU LOOK AT GINJI'S GAME, YOU'LL SEE IT RIGHT AWAY.
THIS IS A STRANGE DRAW TO MAKE
AND THEN THIS WAS HIS HAND RIGHT BEFORE HE GOT INTO TENPAI.
HERE HE DREW THE 3-MAN AND WAS IN TENPAI WAITING ON 1-MAN OR 4-MAN.
AND THEN ON THE 8TH TURN, GOT THAT SAME 3-MAN BACK AND DECLARED RICHI...
AND INTENTIONALLY DISCARDED IT ON THE 2ND TURN.
HE HAD THE 3-MAN FOR THAT SEQUENCE IN HIS STARTING HAND

GINJI HAD IT IN HIS SIGHTS!
IT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE...

WHY ELSE WOULD HE PLAY IRREGULARLY LIKE THAT

HE WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THE SAME TILE, THAT 3-MAN, ON THE 8TH TURN
IF HE HADN'T DISCARDED THE 3-MAN EARLY


THAT'S WHY HE KEPT THE 2-MAN IN HIS HAND THE WHOLE TIME...!

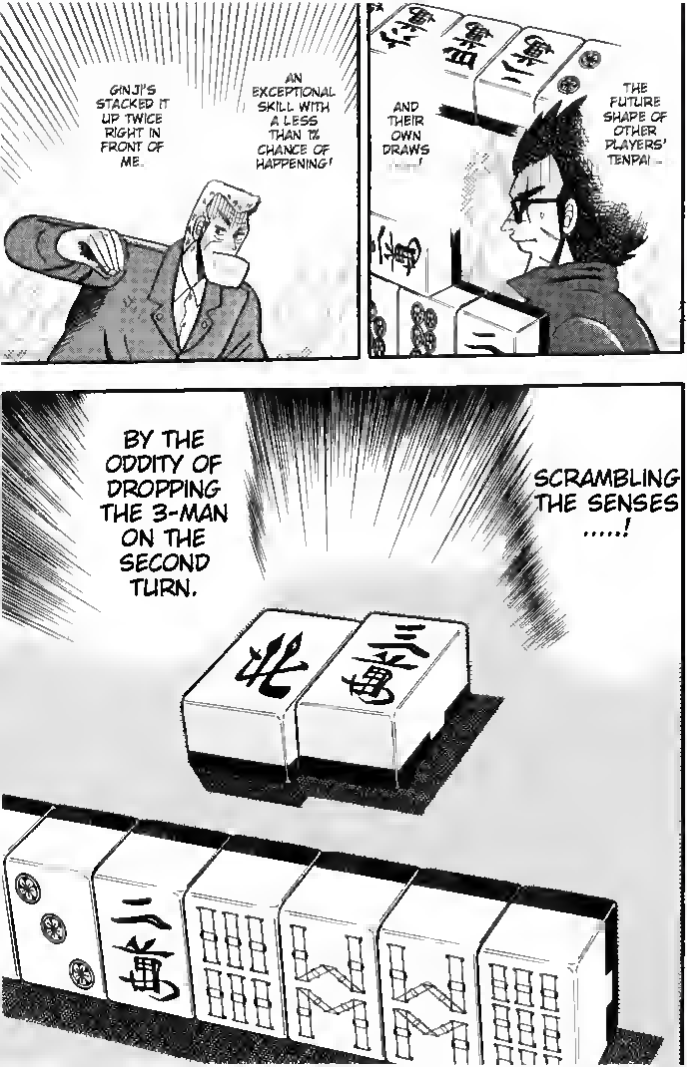
THAT WAS THE TILE I WAS WAITING TO RON WITH.

THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT...
IN OTHER WORDS...

EVEN IF YOU PLAYED AGAINST A WELL-KNOWN PRO PLAYER 100 TIMES OUT OF 100, THAT WOULDN'T HAPPEN.
MOST OF THIS IS PRETTY UNBELIEVABLE...

HE GOT RID OF THE 3-MAN FROM THE START TO BE READY...
IT WAS SO THAT GINJI COULD AVOID DEALING INTO MY HAND...

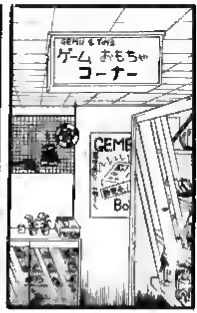
ON THE 8TH TURN...
OF COURSE, FOR THAT HE HAD TO HAVE GOTTEN WIND THAT HE WOULD DRAW THE SAME 3-MAN...


GINJI'S STACKED IT UP TWICE RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
AN EXCEPTIONAL SKILL WITH A LESS THAN 1% CHANCE OF HAPPENING!
AND THEIR OWN DRAWS!
THE FUTURE SHAPE OF OTHER PLAYERS' TENPAI...
BY THE ODDITY OF DROPPING THE 3-MAN ON THE SECOND TURN.
SCRAMBLING THE SENSES.....!

SEIBU
SEIBU

SEIBU

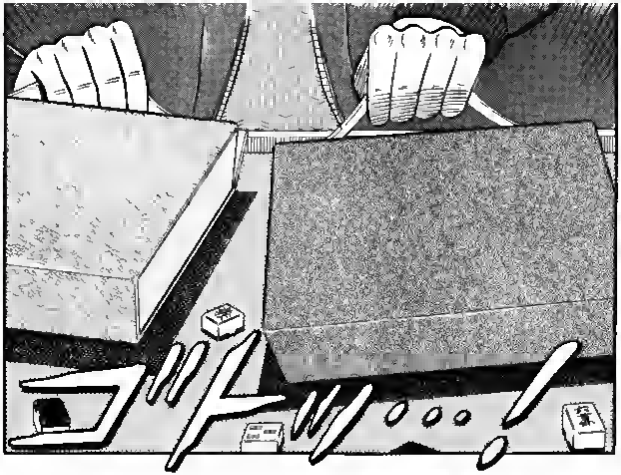
I'LL TAKE THAT ONE AND THAT ONE TOO
MISS.


SEIBU & YAHA
ゲーム おもちゃ
コーナー

THERE'S ONLY ONE REASON BEHIND IT.
IN THIS CASE NORMALLY

THERE'S NO WAY HE COULD HAVE PUT MARKS ON THEM.
BUT IT WAS ONLY THE EAST 3RD ROUND.
HE DIDN'T ACT LIKE HE HAD.....
THEN WHAT THE HELL WAS IT...?
GANPAI .....!
THE MAJORITY OF THE TIME, I KNOW IT'S JUST SOMETHING RIDICULOUS.
I HATE SUPERNATURAL EXPLANATIONS FOR THESE THINGS.
.....
FOR-SEEING THE TILES!
HAS A KIND OF STRANGE SENSE .....!
THAT GINJI...
BUT IF THAT'S WHAT IT IS I'LL JUST HAVE TO ACCEPT IT THEN, WON'T I.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE, WALKING OUT ON US?
HEY, YOU .....!
THAT'S DAMN SELFISH
SORRY ABOUT THAT...
HOLDING ONTO THAT 500,000... YOU CAN'T PUT US IN A SPOT LIKE THAT...
SEIBU
WHY, IF I WIN
I'LL GIVE YOU A PERCENTAGE OF IT, SO JUST LET ME OFF THE HOOK!
THERE WAS SOMETHING I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT...
BUT BEFORE THAT
ONCE AGAIN
THE GAME RESUMES GINJI
NOW THEN
SEIBU

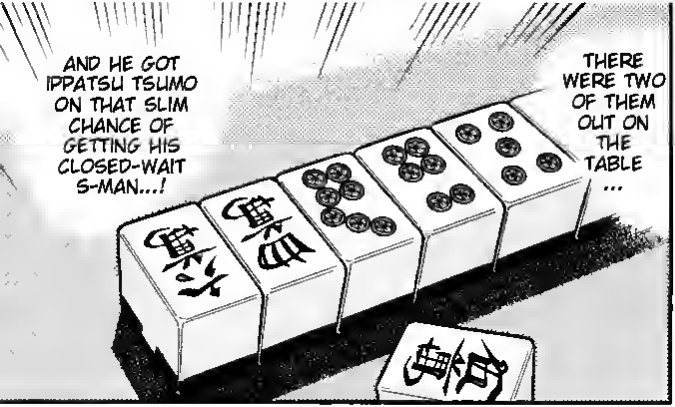


YEAH, TRY IT ONCE MORE, GINJI …!

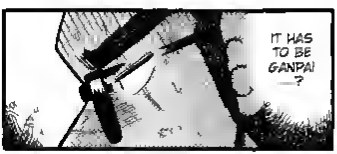
I'LL ACCEPT IT
IF IT SHOWS UP ONE MORE TIME NOW
A TRICK
WHETHER IT'S EXPERIENCE INTUITION, OR
IS NO DIFFERENT FROM A GODLIKE SKILL.
A SUPER-HIGH GRADE WEAPON

CHAPTER 32
REASON AND ERROR

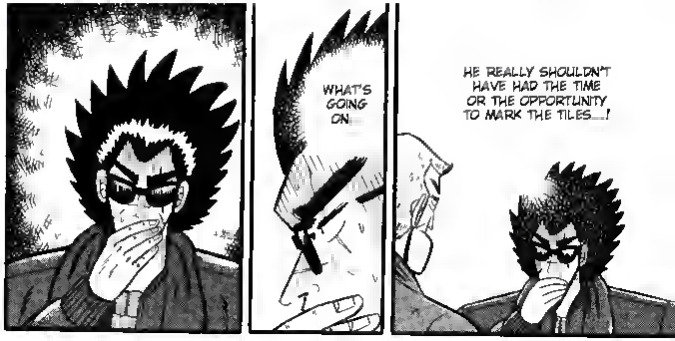
GINJI VS TEN
THE MATCH RESUMED.
AFTER THE TILES WERE REPLACED AND READY
AS USUAL, THERE WAS NOTHING STRANGE ABOUT GINJI AT THE BEGINNING ——
BUT…… AFTER ABOUT THREE ROUNDS HAD PASSED, IN THE SOUTH 1ST ROUND
RIICHI.
TSUMO.


AND HE GOT IPPATSU TSUMO ON THAT SLIM CHANCE OF GETTING HIS CLOSED-WAIT 5-MAN...!
THERE WERE TWO OF THEM OUT ON THE TABLE ...

AND THERE'S A DOUBLE-SIDED WAIT IN HIS DISCARDS.


IT HAS TO BE GANPAI —?

AND AGAIN, IT'S HARDLY BEEN 2 OR 3 ROUNDS
THAT'S A BIT TOO FAST—!
BUT..... I CAN'T FIND ANY MARKS LIKE THAT ON THE TILES


WHAT'S GOING ON...
HE REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE HAD THE TIME OR THE OPPORTUNITY TO MARK THE TILES...!

I'M NOT GETTING WIND OF HOW GINJI'S DOING THIS I CAN'T FEEL IT
NOTHING'S COMING TO ME...!
IT'S NO GOOD...

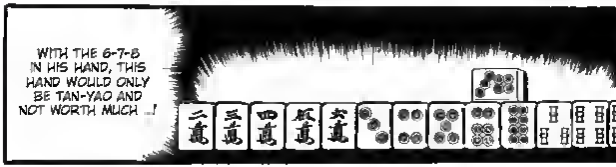
SOUTH 1ST ROUND
GINJI CONTINUES AS DEALER
FOR NOW, THE RESULT HAS TO BE... GANPAI
I'LL ASSUME THAT AND PLAY ACCORDINGLY
I'M NOT GETTING ANY CLUES TO FIGURE IT OUT WITH...

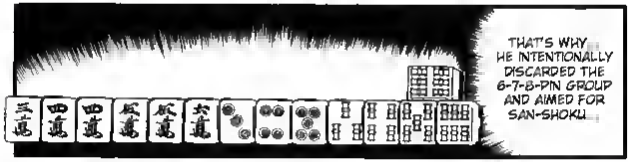
HE DISCARDED A CLOSED WAIT...
7TH TURN
8TH TURN
HE WOULDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE IN THIS KIND OF DECISION IF HE WAS USING GANPAI...
SO HE DECIDED HE WOULDN'T GET A 7-PIN, HUH...

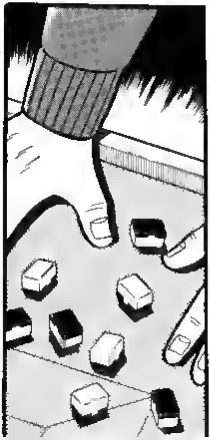
HUH...?
THAT'S CRAZY...
HE GOT A WHOLE GROUP OF THREE TILES.../
SORRY... THAT'S THE ONE
NEXT TURN

7700, AND WITH THIS AS MY SECOND ROUND AS DEALER, THAT'S 8000 TOTAL.
TAN-YAO, SANSHOKU ON THE 3-4-5...!
FOR A SAN-SHOKU HAND, HUH
DROPPED A WHOLE GROUP OF THREE AHEAD OF TIME
URGH...
YOU'RE DAMN LUCKY

BEING ABLE TO SEE THE TILES IS PRETTY HANDY
I SEE...


WITH THE 6-7-8 IN HIS HAND, THIS HAND WOULD ONLY BE TAN-YAO AND NOT WORTH MUCH...!


THAT'S WHY HE INTENTIONALLY DISCARDED THE 6-7-8-PIN GROUP AND AIMED FOR SAN-SHOKU...



PLAYING LIKE THIS IS JUST KILLING ME
HE CAN DO WHATEVER HE WANTS
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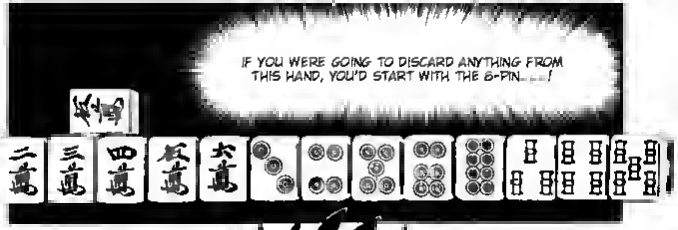
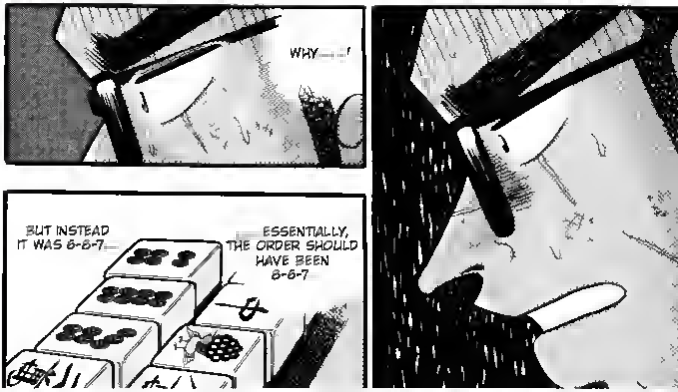
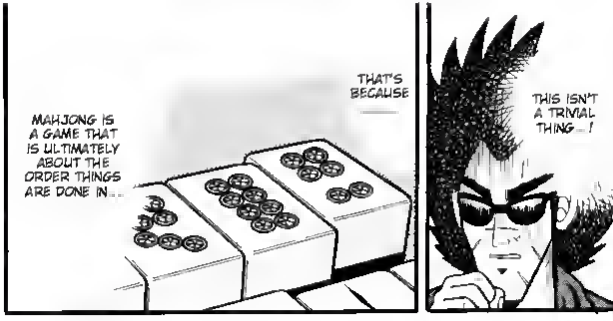
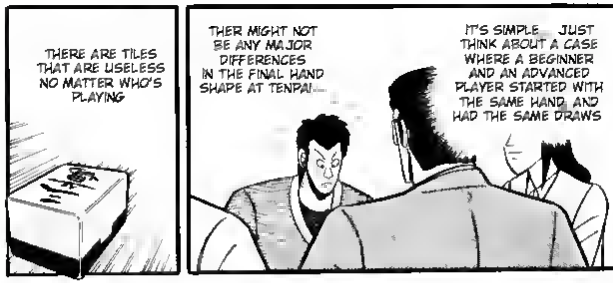
IF YOU CAN SEE THE FLOW TOWARDS SAN-SHOKU IN THE WALL
IT DOESN'T HURT TO GET RID OF A WHOLE GROUP OF THREE
IT ACTS AS A SMOKE-SCREEN FOR THE GANPAI, TOO
TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE

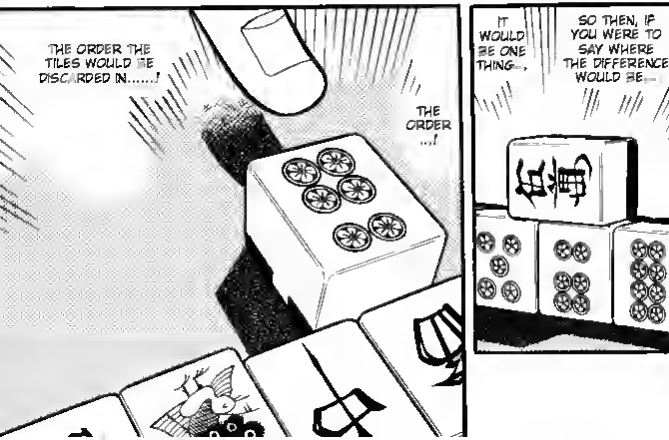
THE SHAPE OF HIS HAND WHEN HE GOT RID OF THE 6-7-8-PIN GROUP WAS
THIS MEANS
WINNING HAND
FROM THE SHAPE OF HIS WINNING HAND AND FROM HIS DISCARDS
WAIT!
RON
DISCARDS
THIS SHAPE...!
EVEN IF HE WAS GETTING RID OF THE 6-PIN AND 8-PIN, WHY WOULD HE START WITH THE 6-PIN...?
WHY...
SO IF HE COULD SEE ALL THE TILES, HE COULD CHANGE THE DRAW ORDER WITH PON AND CHI!
...!
HE WOULDN'T GET RID OF THE 6-PIN HERE...!
4-5-6 IS THERE, TOO...!
THIS HAND ISN'T JUST SANSHOKU WITH 3-4-5...!

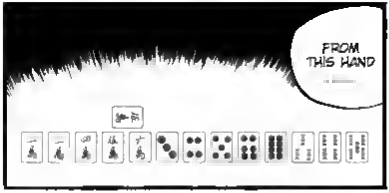

IF YOU WERE GOING TO DISCARD ANYTHING FROM THIS HAND, YOU'D START WITH THE 8-PIN.....!


WHY.....!
BUT INSTEAD IT WAS 8-8-7...
ESSENTIALLY, THE ORDER SHOULD HAVE BEEN 8-8-7


MAHJONG IS A GAME THAT IS ULTIMATELY ABOUT THE ORDER THINGS ARE DONE IN...
THAT'S BECAUSE
THIS ISN'T A TRIVIAL THING...!

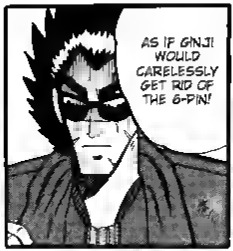

THERE ARE TILES THAT ARE USELESS NO MATTER WHO'S PLAYING
THER MIGHT NOT BE ANY MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN THE FINAL HAND SHAPE AT TENPAI...
IT'S SIMPLE... JUST THINK ABOUT A CASE WHERE A BEGINNER AND AN ADVANCED PLAYER STARTED WITH THE SAME HAND, AND HAD THE SAME DRAWS


THE ORDER THE TILES WOULD BE DISCARDED IN.....!
THE ORDER ...!
IT WOULD BE ONE THING...
SO THEN, IF YOU WERE TO SAY WHERE THE DIFFERENCE WOULD BE...


FROM THIS HAND

GINJI CONTINUES AS DEALER.
IN OTHER WORDS
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE WITH SKILLS AND PEOPLE WITHOUT IS ULTIMATELY WHERE THEY RUN OUT OF OPTIONS

SOMETHING'S GOING ON!


AS IF GINJI WOULD CARELESSLY GET RID OF THE 6-PIN!

HE STARTED WITH THE 6-PIN...!

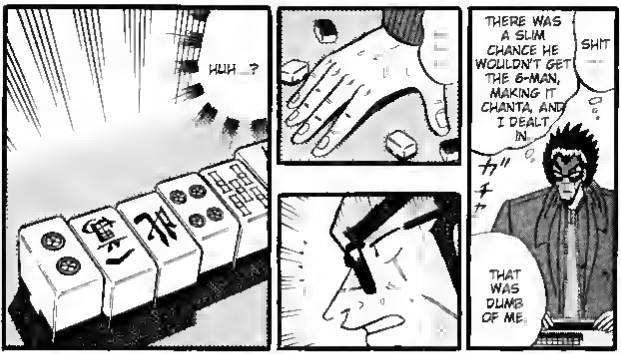
FOR SOME REASON, BACK THEN...
IT'S BEYOND THE NORMAL LOGIC OF MAHJONG

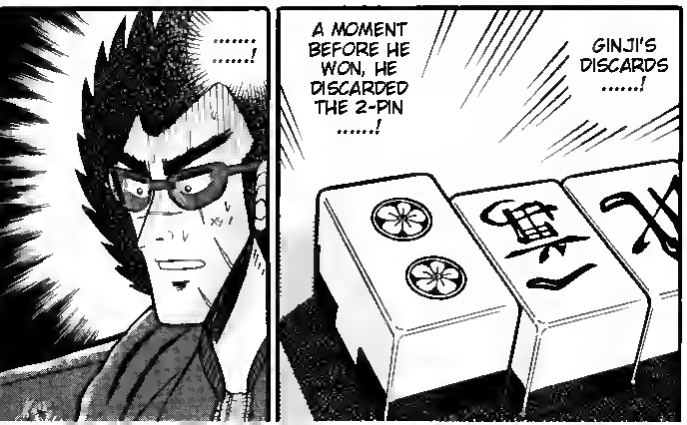
A MISTAKE THAT THE INVINCIBLE GINJI WOULDN'T MAKE BUT NOW...

IT'S THE FIRST OPENING I'VE SPOTTED...
GINJI...!

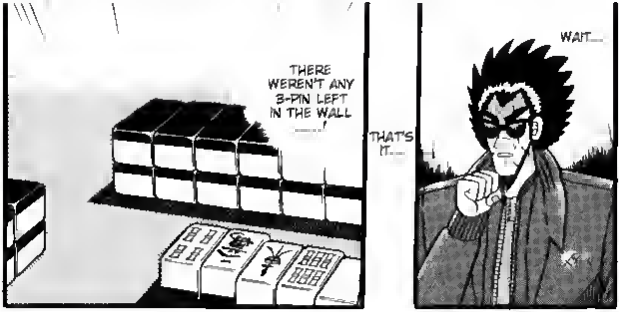
THE SCENT OF THAT BACKWARDS DISCARD WITH THE 6-8-PIN .....!
YOU'VE LEFT YOUR SCENT ON THE TILES.
カミッ
I SHOULD ARRIVE AT GINJI'S SECRET
IF I TRACK DOWN THAT SCENT...
キュッ
GINJI CONTINUES AS DEALER
6TH TURN
IT'S ONLY SAN-SHOKU AND NOT WORTH MUCH
IT'S ONLY THE 6TH TURN...
.....GET RID OF THE 3-PIN AND I'M IN TENPAI, BUT ...
5-6-7 SAN-SHOKU

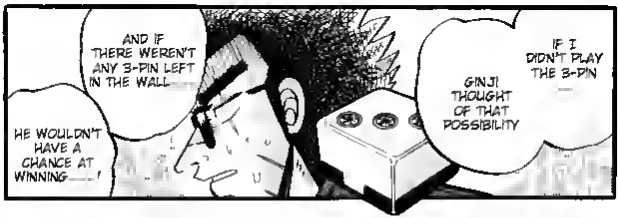
I'LL TRY TO MAKE IT WORTH MORE...
SORRY...
THAT'S IT.
JUN-CHAN SAN-SHOKU...
AN IRREGULAR WAIT ON THE 6-MAN 9-MAN, OR 1-PIN...!
URGH...

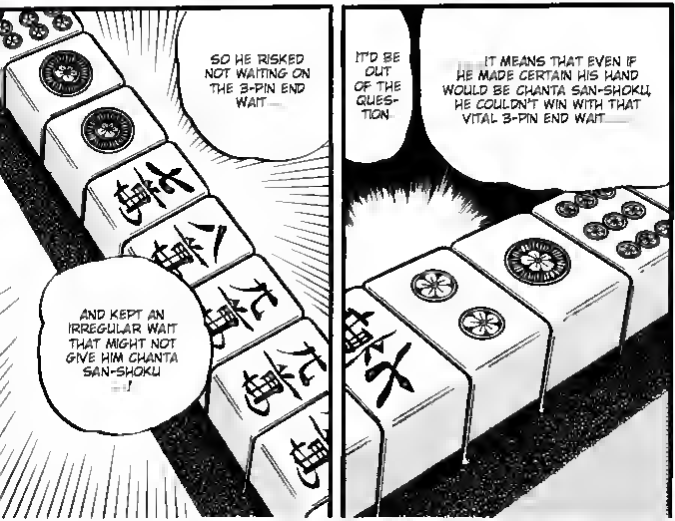

HUH...?
THERE WAS A SLIM CHANCE HE WOULDN'T GET THE 6-MAN, MAKING IT CHANTA, AND I DEALT IN.
SHIT
THAT WAS DUMB OF ME.


.....!
A MOMENT BEFORE HE WON, HE DISCARDED THE 2-PIN .....!
GINJI'S DISCARDS .....!

IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CHANGE HIS HAND TO AN END WAIT ON THE 3-PIN.
WITH GINJI'S IRREGULAR WAIT
THEN WHAT WAS IT?
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN SET FOR CHANTA SAN-SHOKU
IF HE HAD KEPT THE 2-PIN HE GOT RID OF A MOMENT AGO
AND FURTHERMORE.. IF HE KNEW WHAT MY HAND WAS WITH GANPAI
MY HAND
UNLESS THE 9-MAN CAME UP. HE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SET HIS SIGHTS ON SAN-SHOKU OR CHANTA..
WHY...? WHY DID HE KEEP THIS STRANGE WAIT.....?
WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER FOR HIM TO HAVE WAITED ON THE 3-PIN END WAIT HERE..?
GETTING RID OF THE 9-MAN IS AN ODD DISCARD TO MAKE..
IT WOULD BE NATURAL TO PREDICT THAT I'D DISCARD THE 3-PIN TO GET INTO TENPAI

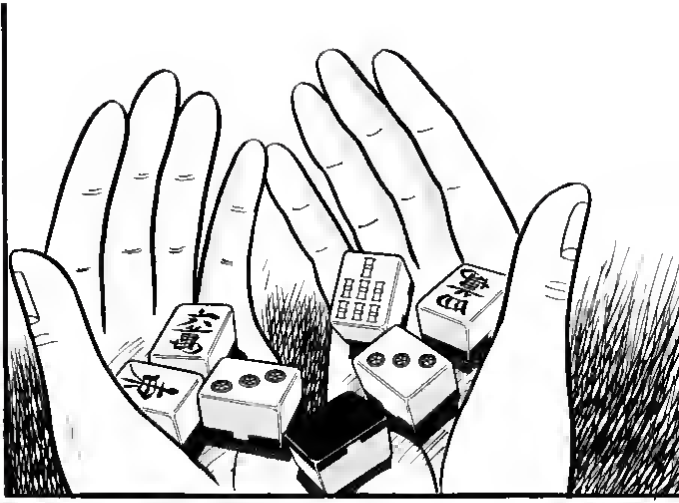

THERE WEREN'T ANY 3-PIN LEFT IN THE WALL.....!
THAT'S IT.....
WAIT.....

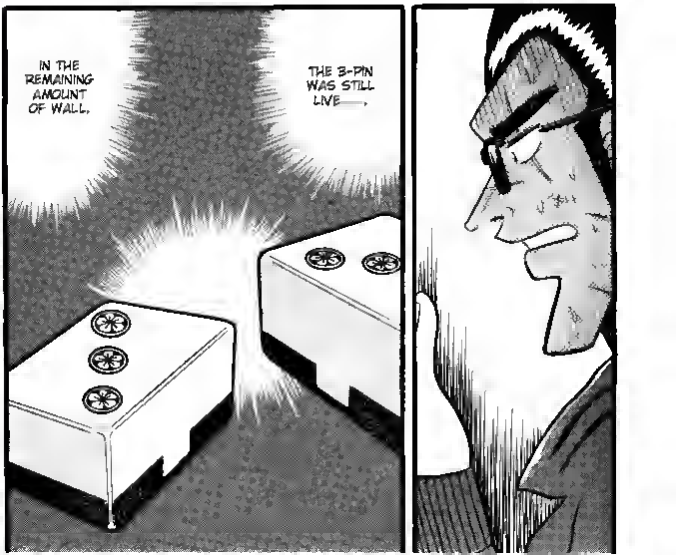

AND IF THERE WEREN'T ANY 3-PIN LEFT IN THE WALL.....
HE WOULDN'T HAVE A CHANCE AT WINNING.....!
GINJI THOUGHT OF THAT POSSIBILITY
IF I DIDN'T PLAY THE 3-PIN.....


SO HE RISKED NOT WAITING ON THE 3-PIN END WAIT.....
AND KEPT AN IRREGULAR WAIT THAT MIGHT NOT GIVE HIM CHANTA SAN-SHOKU.....!
IT'D BE OUT OF THE QUES-TION.
IT MEANS THAT EVEN IF HE MADE CERTAIN HIS HAND WOULD BE CHANTA SAN-SHOKU, HE COULDN'T WIN WITH THAT VITAL 3-PIN END WAIT.....

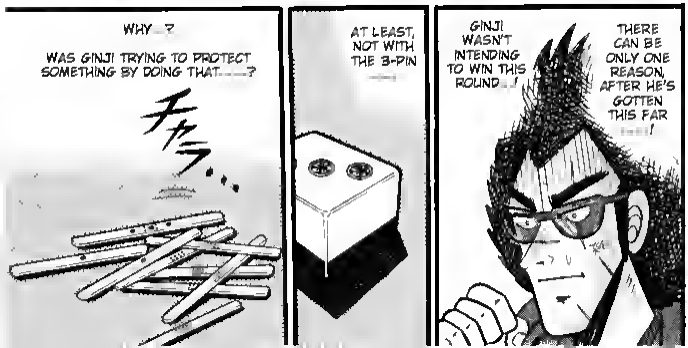
.....IT CAN'T BE ANYTHING ELSE...!
THAT WAS TEN'S LOGIC
BUT IN ONE INSTANT
TEN CAUGHT SIGHT OF SOMETHING UNTHINKABLE
HUH?
WHA...
WHAT...?

THIS IS
THIS IS THE WALL HE'D HAVE BEEN DRAWING FROM SOON
?
?

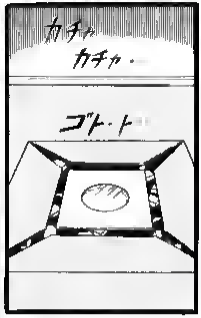



IN THE REMAINING AMOUNT OF WALL.
THE 3-PIN WAS STILL LIVE——.

WHAT THE HELL.....?
THEN... WHY...? WHY DIDN'T HE WAIT ON THE 3-PIN?


WHY...?
WAS GINJI TRYING TO PROTECT SOMETHING BY DOING THAT.....?
チラ...
AT LEAST, NOT WITH THE 3-PIN
GINJI WASN'T INTENDING TO WIN THIS ROUND...!
THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE REASON, AFTER HE'S GOTTEN THIS FAR.....!

IT COULD ONLY BE
THE SECRET TO GINJI'S PREDICTIONS .....!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NO... EVEN FROM WHEN I FIRST MET HIM TEN YEARS AGO
THAT'S RIGHT... WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT NOW, GINJI'S ALWAYS BEEN STICKING TO THAT WAY OF THINKING.
IF I TOOK IT AT FACE VALUE
AND THIS TIME I'VE BEEN SIMPLY IMAGINING IT AS GANPAI
...WITHOUT A DOUBT, BAIT TO TRICK HIS OPPONENT...
THIS FAMOUS SAN-SHOKU IS
AN ILLUSION CREATED BY GINJI
A SORT OF ELABORATE SMOKESCREEN TO DRAW THE EYE AWAY FROM THE ESSENCE OF GINJI'S PLAYING STYLE.
INSTEAD I'D BE LED RIGHT INTO HIS TRAP...

HE'S GIVEN AWAY HOW HE DOES HIS TRICK——!
BUT BY PASSING OVER THAT 3-PIN JUST NOW——
I'VE FIGURED IT OUT...!
GINJI'S SECRET, CLOAKED DEEP WITHIN AN ILLUSION

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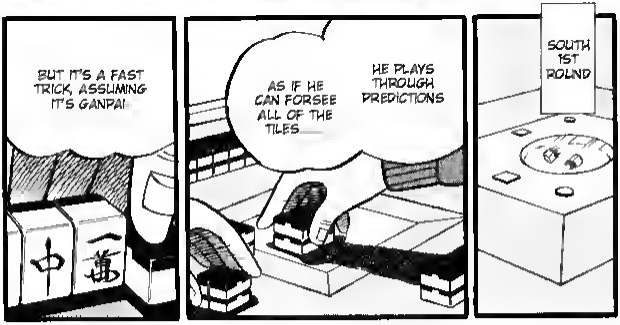
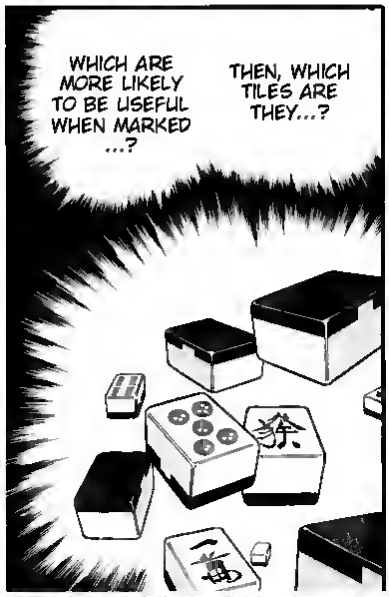
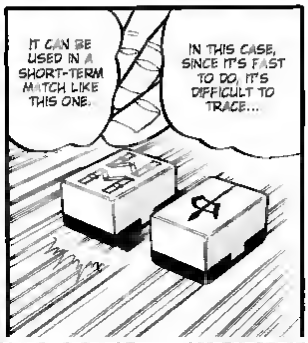

BUT IT'S A FAST TRICK, ASSUMING IT'S GANPAI
AS IF HE CAN FORSEE ALL OF THE TILES...
HE PLAYS THROUGH PREDICTIONS
SOUTH 1ST ROUND

I'VE FINALLY FIGURED IT OUT...!
THAT SECRET
GINJI'S MAHJONG IS A TERRIBLE MAGIC THAT PEOPLE START TO FEAR IN ABOUT THREE ROUNDS
WHY...?

CHAPTER 33
3 AND 7...


WHICH ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE USEFUL WHEN MARKED ...?
THEN, WHICH TILES ARE THEY...?

A SORT OF LIMITED GANPAI.


IT CAN BE USED IN A SHORT-TERM MATCH LIKE THIS ONE.
IN THIS CASE, SINCE IT'S FAST TO DO, IT'S DIFFICULT TO TRACE...

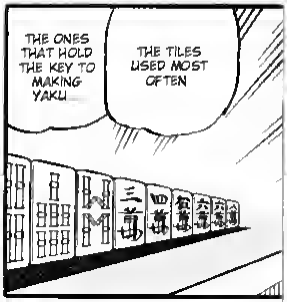
GINJI EFFECTIVELY HAS SIMPLE GANPAI.
HE'S NOT FOLLOWING ALL THE TILES.

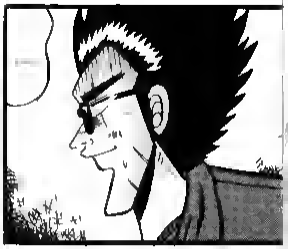
FOR GINJI, SINCE HE'S GOOD AT MAHJONG, BY KNOWING AROUND 20% OF THE TILES
BUT HE DOESN'T NEED TO..
HE CAN SEE THROUGH ALMOST EVERYTHING

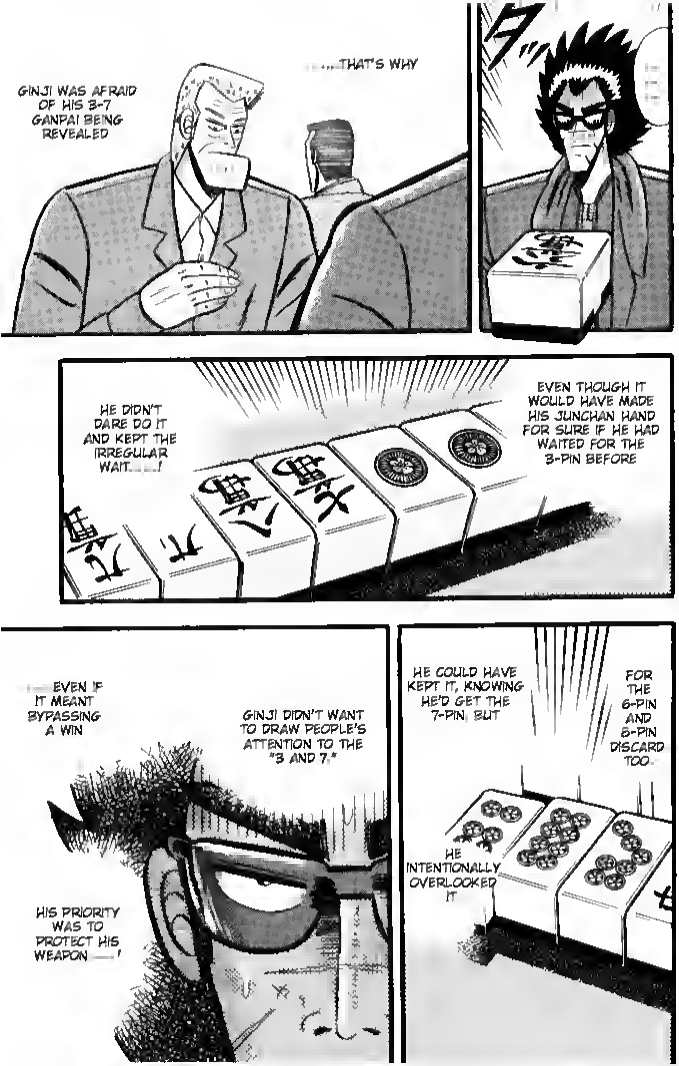
IT'S SIMPLE---

WHAT ARE THOSE TILES ...?

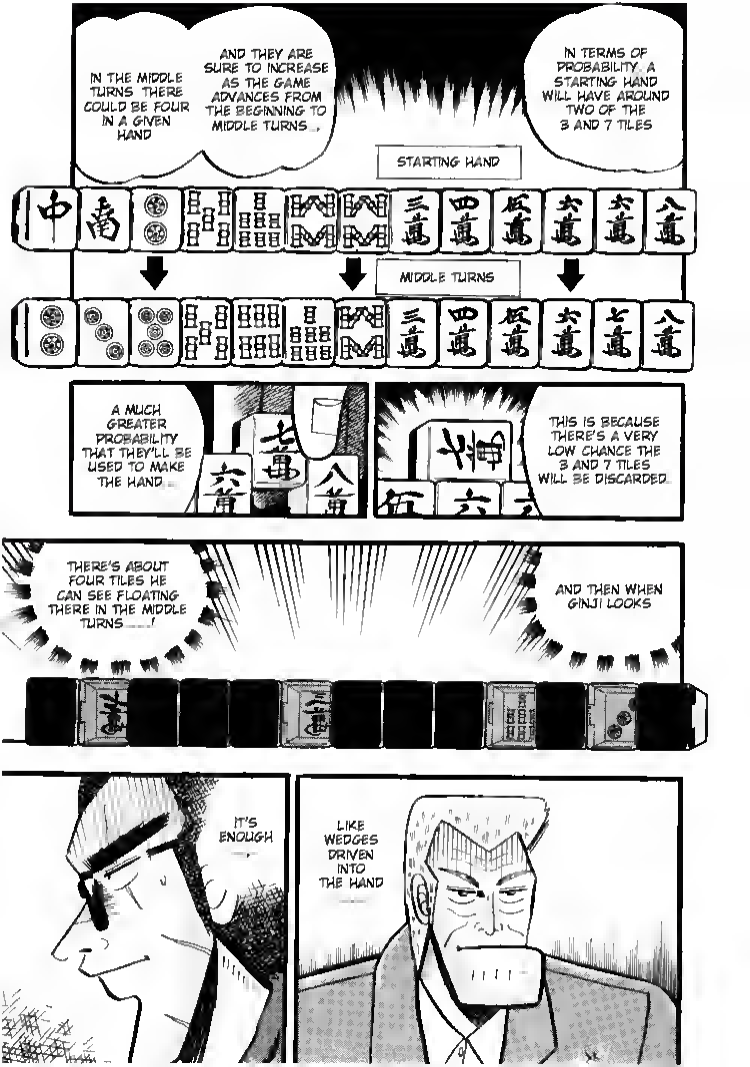
THEY HAVE TO BE THE 3 AND 7 TILES...!


THE TILES USED MOST OFTEN
THE ONES THAT HOLD THE KEY TO MAKING YAKU

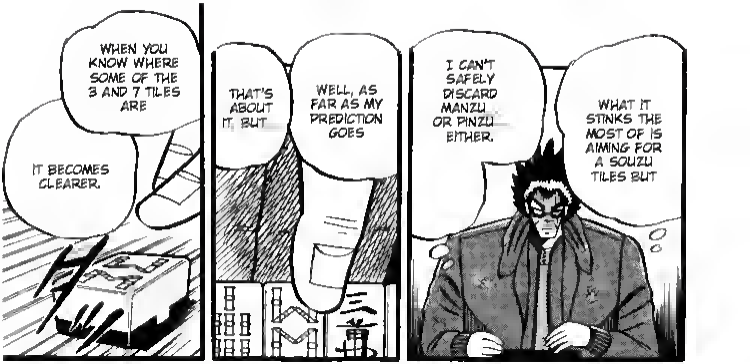



GINJI WAS AFRAID OF HIS 3-7 GANPAI BEING REVEALED
...THAT'S WHY
HE DIDN'T DARE DO IT AND KEPT THE IRREGULAR WAIT...!
EVEN THOUGH IT WOULD HAVE MADE HIS JUNCHAN HAND FOR SURE IF HE HAD WAITED FOR THE 3-PIN BEFORE
...EVEN IF IT MEANT BYPASSING A WIN
GINJI DIDN'T WANT TO DRAW PEOPLE'S ATTENTION TO THE "3 AND 7."
HIS PRIORITY WAS TO PROTECT HIS WEAPON...!
HE COULD HAVE KEPT IT, KNOWING HE'D GET THE 7-PIN. BUT
FOR THE 6-PIN AND 8-PIN DISCARD TOO.
HE INTENTIONALLY OVERLOOKED IT

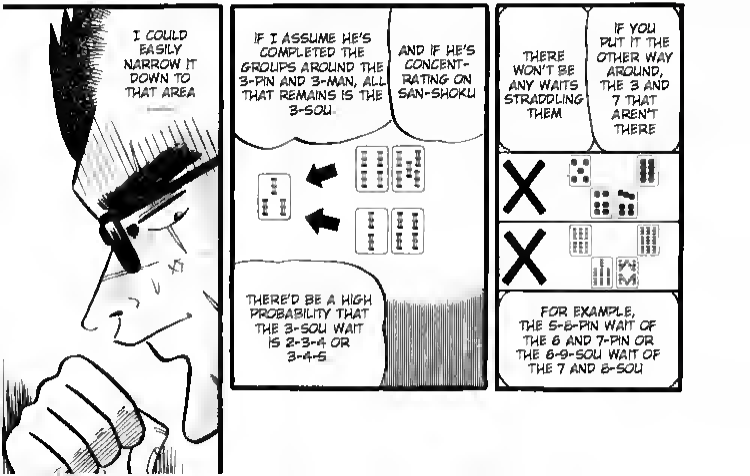
AND THAT'S WHERE HE DUG HIS OWN GRAVE
WOULD HAVE A NERVOUS RESPONSE TOWARD THE "3 AND 7"—!
ONLY SOMEONE WHO WAS AWARE OF THE TRICK
AND THEN
BUT THEY HOLD THE DEEPEST MEANING
OUT OF ALL 24 TILES (136 IN TOTAL), THE 3 AND 7 AREN'T EVEN 20%, MORE LIKE 16 OR 17%...
WHAT IS THE BENEFIT TO A PLAYER OF GINJI'S CLASS IN KNOWING THE LOCATION OF THE "3 AND 7" TILES ?


IN THE MIDDLE TURNS THERE COULD BE FOUR IN A GIVEN HAND
AND THEY ARE SURE TO INCREASE AS THE GAME ADVANCES FROM THE BEGINNING TO MIDDLE TURNS...
IN TERMS OF PROBABILITY, A STARTING HAND WILL HAVE AROUND TWO OF THE 3 AND 7 TILES
STARTING HAND
MIDDLE TURNS
A MUCH GREATER PROBABILITY THAT THEY'LL BE USED TO MAKE THE HAND...
THIS IS BECAUSE THERE'S A VERY LOW CHANCE THE 3 AND 7 TILES WILL BE DISCARDED...
THERE'S ABOUT FOUR TILES HE CAN SEE FLOATING THERE IN THE MIDDLE TURNS...!
AND THEN WHEN GINJI LOOKS
IT'S ENOUGH
LIKE WEDGES DRIVEN INTO THE HAND

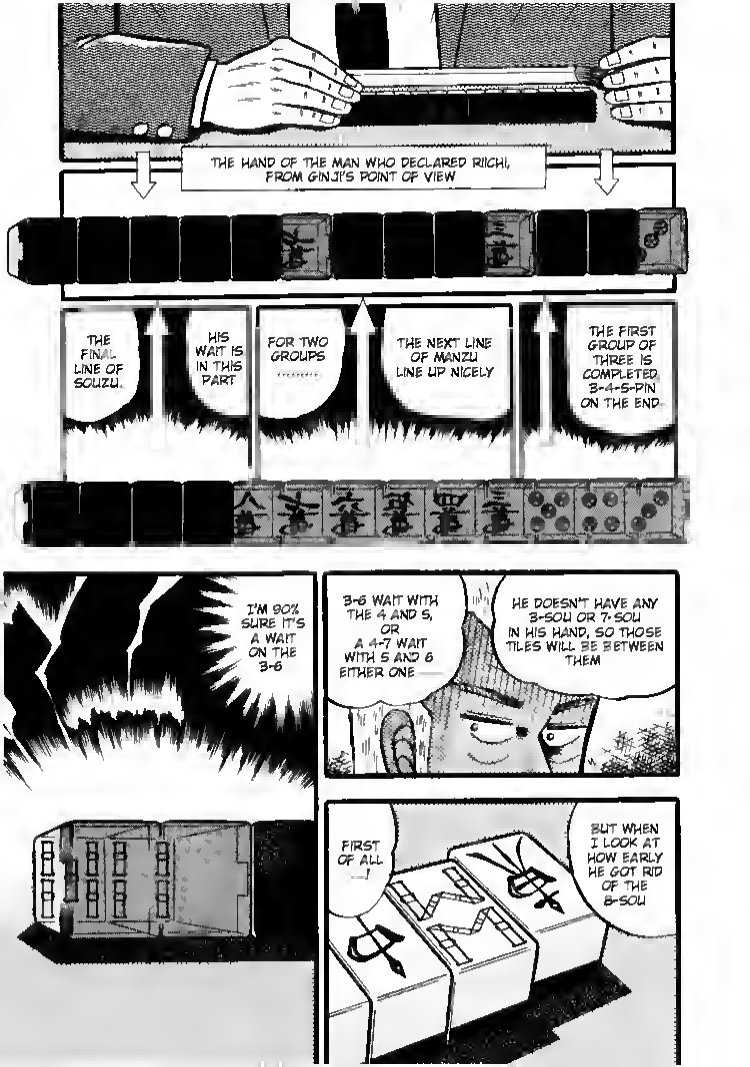
I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MARKS FOR THE GANPAI ARE, BUT
I'M PRETTY MUCH CERTAIN GINJI'S WEAPON IS MARKINGS ON THE 3 AND 7
FUNDAMENTALLY, THE MAIN PREMISE OF HIS PREDICTION IS THAT THE TILES ARE ORGANIZED BUT
EVEN IF THE TILES ARE ARRANGED DIFFERENTLY
GINJI SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET A GENERAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE TILES.
RIICHI.
FOR INSTANCE, THIS RIICHI
IF I WAS TO DIRECTLY PREDICT IT BASED ON THESE DISCARDS...
HE'S GOING FOR MENZEN TSUMO, TAN-YAO, PIN-FU, ALONG WITH A LOWER SAN-SHOKU HAND


WHEN YOU KNOW WHERE SOME OF THE 3 AND 7 TILES ARE
IT BECOMES CLEARER.
THAT'S ABOUT IT, BUT
WELL, AS FAR AS MY PREDICTION GOES
I CAN'T SAFELY DISCARD MANZU OR PINZU EITHER.
WHAT IT STINKS THE MOST OF IS AIMING FOR A SOUZU TILES BUT

THE 3-PIN, 3-MAN AND 7-MAN SINCE I THINK HE HAS THOSE IN HIS HAND
IF... YEAH


I COULD EASILY NARROW IT DOWN TO THAT AREA
IF I ASSUME HE'S COMPLETED THE GROUPS AROUND THE 3-PIN AND 3-MAN, ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE 3-SOU.
AND IF HE'S CONCENTRATING ON SAN-SHOKU
THERE'D BE A HIGH PROBABILITY THAT THE 3-SOU WAIT IS 2-3-4 OR 3-4-5
THERE WON'T BE ANY WAITS STRADDLING THEM
IF YOU PUT IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND, THE 3 AND 7 THAT AREN'T THERE
FOR EXAMPLE, THE 5-6-PIN WAIT OF THE 6 AND 7-PIN OR THE 6-9-SOU WAIT OF THE 7 AND 8-SOU

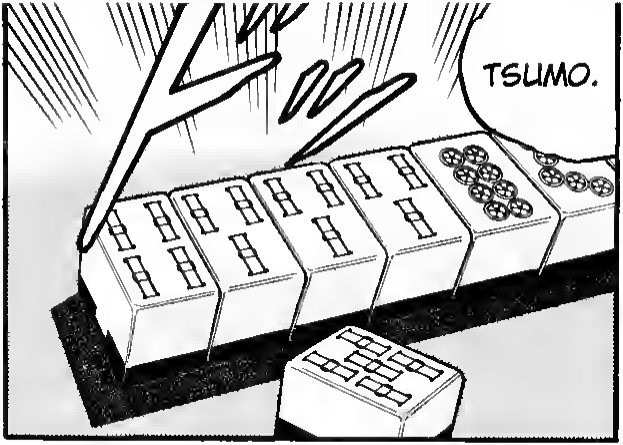
THEN THE LOWER NUMBER TILES...
OR IF HE'S GOT HIS HANDS ON THE 4-SOU THROUGH 7-SOU
1-4-PIN, 2-5-PIN, 1-4-MAN
HE'S GOT THE 4-SOU AND 5-SOU...
MY GUESS IS THE 3-6 WAIT.
GINJI SHOULD HAVE A CLEARER GRASP OF IT...
BUT BECAUSE THAT GUY HAS HIS TILES ORGANIZED

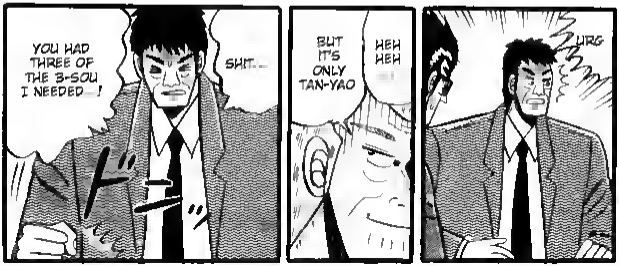

THE HAND OF THE MAN WHO DECLARED RIICHI, FROM GINJI'S POINT OF VIEW
THE FINAL LINE OF SOUZU.
HIS WAIT IS IN THIS PART
FOR TWO GROUPS .....
THE NEXT LINE OF MANZU LINE UP NICELY
THE FIRST GROUP OF THREE IS COMPLETED. 3-4-5-PIN ON THE END
I'M 90% SURE IT'S A WAIT ON THE 3-6
3-6 WAIT WITH THE 4 AND 5, OR A 4-7 WAIT WITH 5 AND 6 EITHER ONE
HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY 8-SOU OR 7-SOU IN HIS HAND, SO THOSE TILES WILL BE BETWEEN THEM
FIRST OF ALL...!
BUT WHEN I LOOK AT HOW EARLY HE GOT RID OF THE 8-SOU

EVERYONE IS AS CLEAR AS GLASS .....
LOOKING AT IT WITH MY EYES
I'M SURE GINJI HAS SOME PREDICTION IN MIND...
HE CALMLY DEALT THAT TILE IN ONE BLOW...
FIGURES

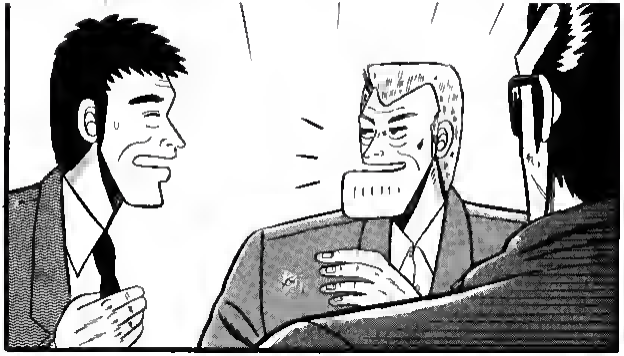
AND THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE 3 AND 7 TILES ARE PUT INTO THE HANDS
THE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GAME IN THE EARLY AND MIDDLE TURNS
IT'S NOT MERELY LIMITED TO PEOPLE'S HANDS...
SINCE HE CAN QUICKLY PREDICT EVERYONE'S HAND
IN BECOMES DIFFICULT TO COMPLETE SEQUENCES... IT TURNS IT INTO A TOITSU-BA.
OR IF SOMEONE'S HAND IS SET ON INCLUDING THE 3 OR 7
WHICH MEANS HE CAN RESPOND FASTER THAT ANYONE
PON.
IT SHOULD BE EFFECTIVE TO CALL ON OTHERS' TILES
SO THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE AIMING FOR CHIN-ITSU OR WHATEVER CAN'T GET THE 3 OR 7

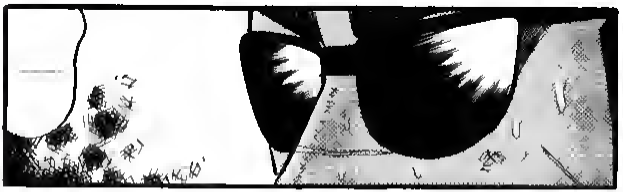
WHO WOULD GINJI POSSIBLY LOSE TO...
WITH THIS ADVANTAGE
.....

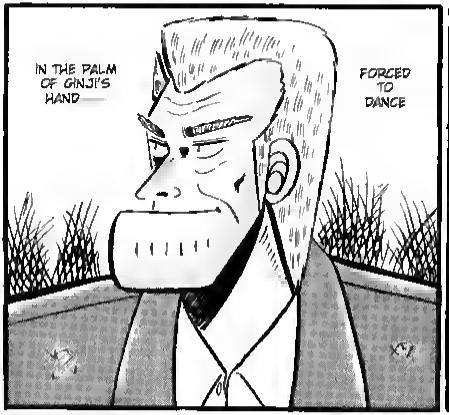

TSUMO.

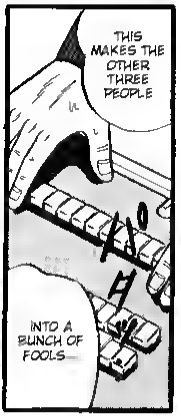

YOU HAD THREE OF THE 3-SOU I NEEDED...!
SHIT...
BUT IT'S ONLY TAN-YAO
HEH HEH
URG

JUST A TINY FRACTION AWAY, HUH
IT'D HAVE BEEN HANEMAN!
IF EVEN ONE OF THOSE HAD COME MY WAY
LOOK!
BOTH FRUSTRATING AND ENJOYABLE AT THE SAME TIME
BUT, WELL, THAT'S MAHJONG FOR YOU
THERE WAS A GOOD POSSIBILITY HE'D DEAL THE 3-SOU INTO THE GUY IN RIICHI!
IT WAS STRANGE THAT HE TOOK THE 5-PIN A MOMENT BEFORE WINING, TOO
EVEN IF HE'D DEALT ANY OTHER DANGEROUS TILES, HE HAD CONTROL OF THE VITAL 3-SOU...
THIS WIN OF GINJI'S

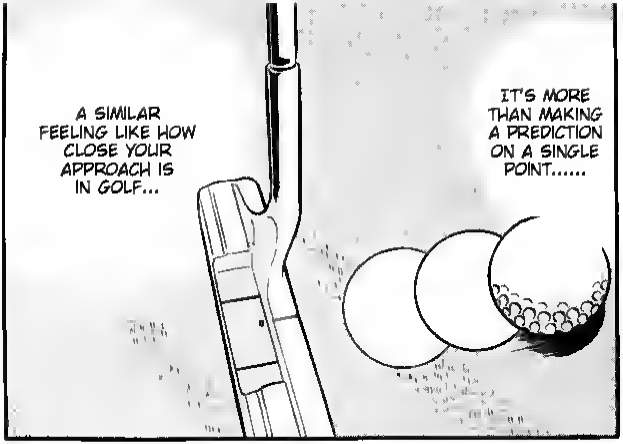


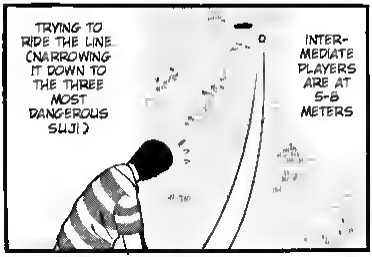



IN THE PALM OF GINJI'S HAND——
FORCED TO DANCE

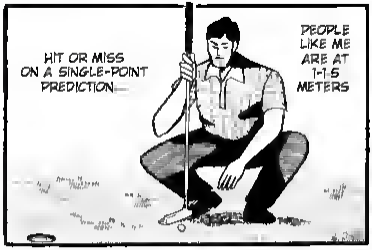

THIS MAKES THE OTHER THREE PEOPLE
INTO A BUNCH OF FOOLS——

ゴゴゴ…
ゴゴゴ…
WE'RE ALWAYS BETTING ON THAT LAST 1%
LIKE WE'RE PULLING ON THE FINE THREADS OF LOGIC TRYING TO KNOW OUR OPPONENT'S HAND JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER.
THAT 1%
PILED ON TOP OF OUR ABILITY AT MAHJONG


A SIMILAR FEELING LIKE HOW CLOSE YOUR APPROACH IS IN GOLF...
IT'S MORE THAN MAKING A PREDICTION ON A SINGLE POINT.....


TRYING TO RIDE THE LINE (NARROWING IT DOWN TO THE THREE MOST DANGEROUS SUJI)
INTER-MEDIATE PLAYERS ARE AT 5-8 METERS

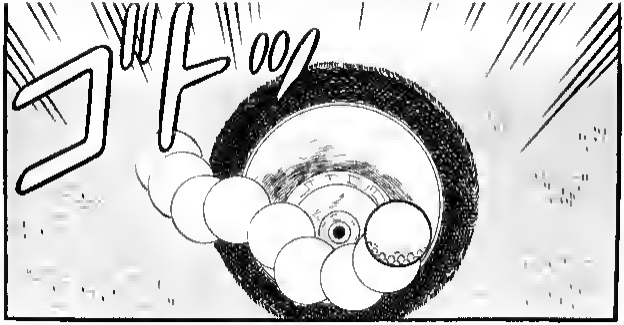
BEGINNER'S PREDICTIONS ARE LIKE BEING AT 10-15 METERS.
IT'S MOSTLY JUST DISTANCE (LIKE RELYING ON YAKU PREDICTIONS AND SUJI IN GENERAL)


HIT OR MISS ON A SINGLE-POINT PREDICTION—
PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE AT 1-1.6 METERS

WHO'S PUTTING FROM SO CM AWAY.
GINJI IS THE ONLY ONE...

AND GINJI JUST COMES IN EASILY FROM THE CENTER!
EVERYONE ELSE IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A TOUGH FIGHT

GINJI IS THE ONLY ONE WHO WON'T MISS.....!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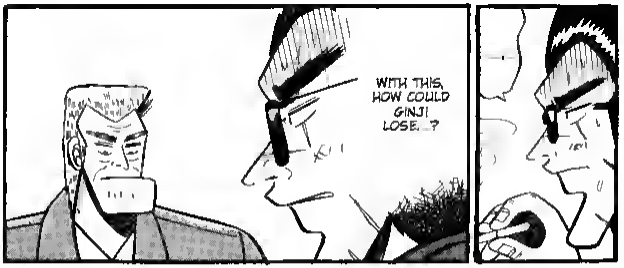

WITH THIS, HOW COULD GINJI LOSE...?

YOU'LL BE MADE A FOOL OF...!
IF YOU CAN'T BREAK THROUGH IT
CALL IT PREDICTING THE GAME OR WHATEVER BUT...

TEN. NEXT TURN
SO FAR...
THAT ONE TOO.
BUT
RIICHI.

TEN'S HAND, FROM GINJI'S POINT OF VIEW
THE WAIT IS TWO-SIDED: TIED TO THE 3-PIN, IT'S WAITING ON THE 2-5-PIN.
7-SOU IS THE PAIR.
FIRST, HE'S GOT A LONG LINE OF MANZU THAT ARE SET IN SEQUENCES — TYPICAL ITSUU HAND
...THIS IS EASY BECAUSE TEN ORGANIZES HIS HAND...
GINJI'S PREDICTION
THIS WILL GO RIGHT ON THROUGH

THAT'S IT... GINJI.
RIICHI, IPPATSU, DORA, AND WITH THIS YOUR FIFTH ROUND AS DEALER, THAT'S 6400...!

WHAT ...?
URGH
A DOUBLE PAIR WAIT ON THE 1-MAN OR 7-SOU...!
...S... SURE FROM THIS SHAPE
IT'S NOT JUST PIN-FU ITSUU... IT CAN BE A DOUBLE PAIR WAIT TOO, BUT...
WE WERE STILL AT A POINT IN THE GAME WHERE HE COULD HAVE CHANGED HIS HAND...!
YOU'D WAIT TO DRAW A 6-SOU OR SOMETHING FOR A PIN-FU HAND...
OR DRAW A 9-MAN FOR ITSUU...
NORMALLY... YOU WOULDN'T RICHI ON THIS SHAPE

WHAT IS HE PLOTTING...
THIS MAN
チャラッ…
SURE, YOUR 3 AND 7 MARKED TILES ARE A STRONG WEAPON
...YOU PROBABLY NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D LOSE
GINJI

BUT..... EVERY WEAPON HAS ITS FLAW...
ALWAYS ...!

CHAPTER 34
THE BLIND SPOT OF 3 AND 7

TEN VS. GINJI
SOUTH 2ND ROUND

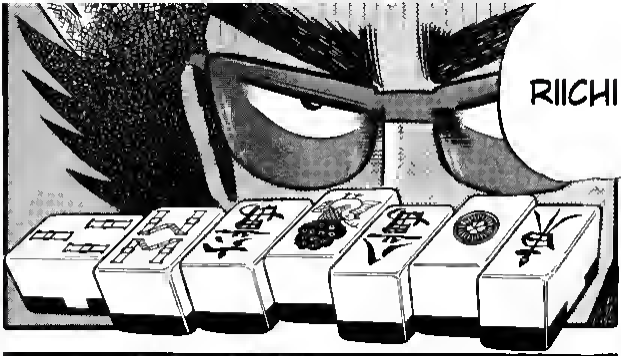
7TH TURN

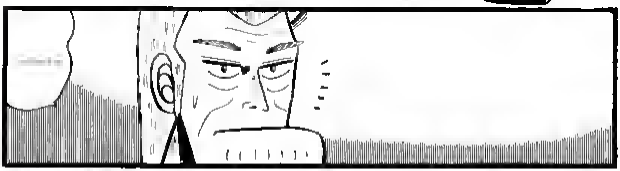
I WOULD HAVE TO KEEP DEALING INTO MANGAN AND HANEMAN HANDS FOR IT TO CHANGE IN TEN'S FAVOR
IT'S TO THE POINT WHERE

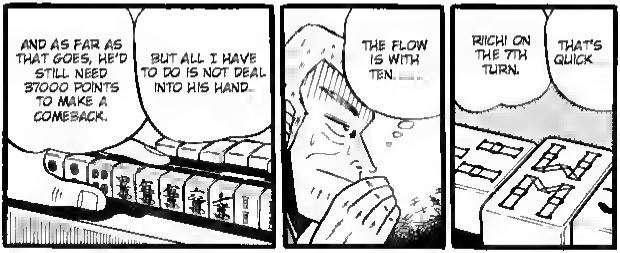
THERE'S AN OVERWHELMING 37000 POINT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US

I CAN'T SEE LOSING HERE.

AND THERE ARE THREE ROUNDS LEFT...!

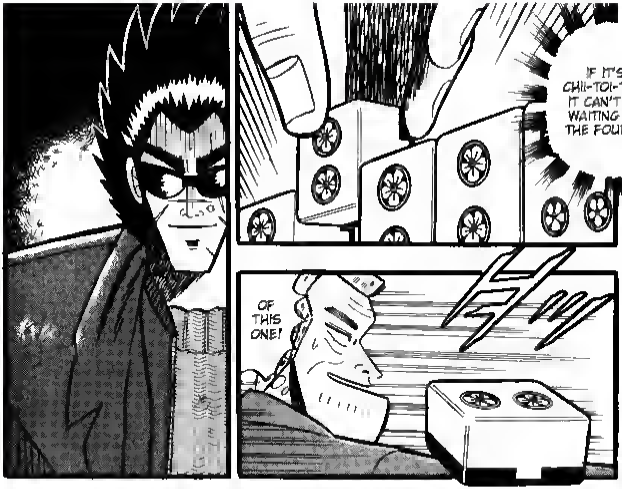

RIICHI.



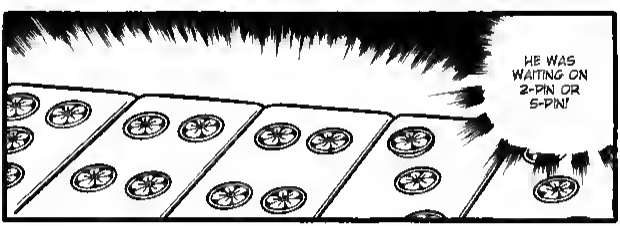

AND AS FAR AS THAT GOES, HE'D STILL NEED 37000 POINTS TO MAKE A COMEBACK.
BUT ALL I HAVE TO DO IS NOT DEAL INTO HIS HAND.
THE FLOW IS WITH TEN.....
RIICHI ON THE 7TH TURN.
THAT'S QUICK.

I CAN USE THE NATURAL STRENGTH OF THE MARKED 3 AND 7 TILES.....!
AND WHEN IT COMES TO DEFENDING

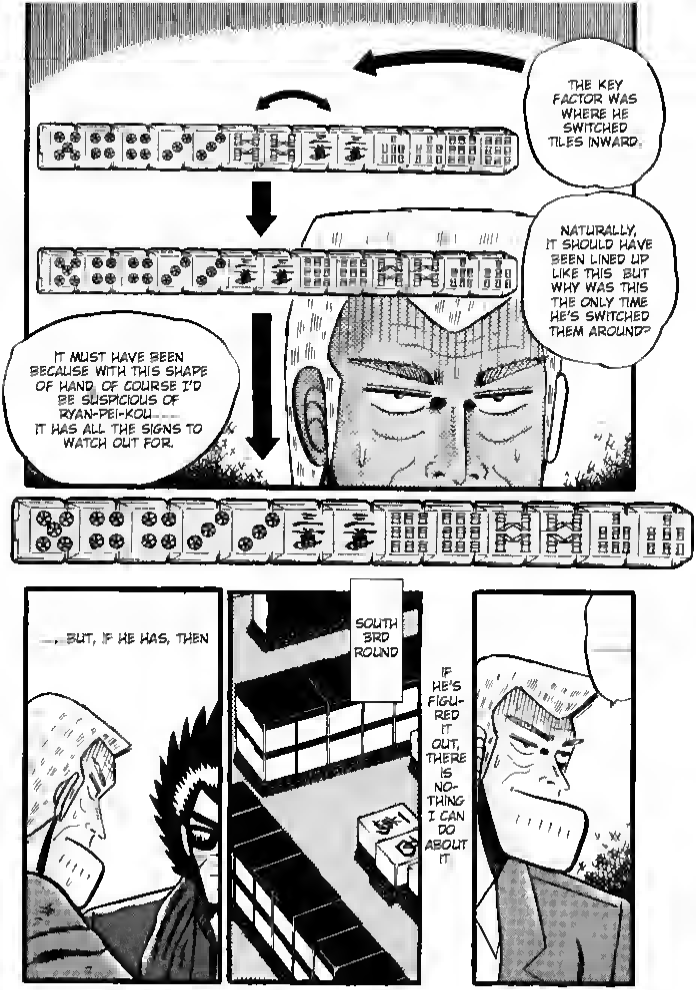
TEN'S HAND
FROM GINJI'S POINT OF VIEW
CHII-TOI-TSU IS THE WORST KIND OF TROUBLE FOR ME
NOW I'M SURE HE KNOWS SOMETHING'S UP
I SEE
IT'S A TYPICAL CHII-TOI-TSU HAND
THERE'S NOTHING TO PREDICT ABOUT THE SINGLE WAIT OF A CHII-TOI-TSU HAND
IT'S ONLY A RANDOM WAIT ON THAT ONE TILE LIEFT
BECAUSE I'M USING THE 3 AND 7 TILES TO GUESS AT THE FLOW OF SEQUENCES IN A HAND. IT MAKES IT A STRAIN TO PREDICT IT FROM THE BEGINNING
I CAN RESPOND PROPERLY
GINJI'S HAND
AS LONG AS I KNOW THE YAKU FOR HIS HAND
BUT DESPITE THAT


IF IT'S CHII-TOI-TSU, IT CAN'T BE WAITING ON THE FOURTH
OF THIS ONE!

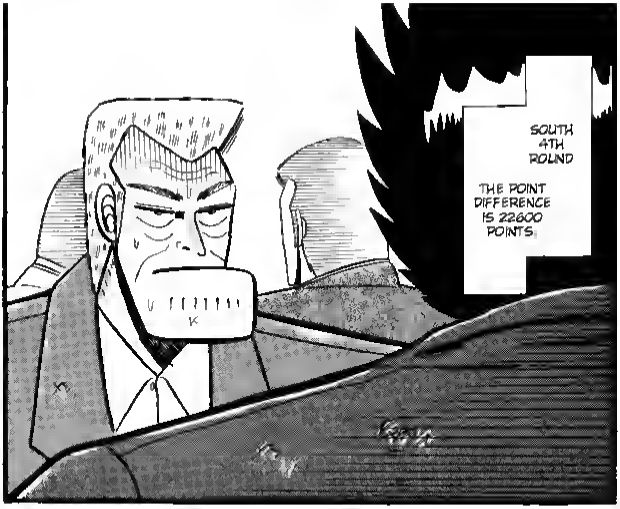
THAT 2-PIN WON'T GO THROUGH
SORRY

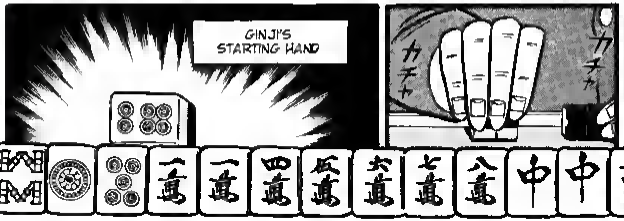

HE WAS WAITING ON 2-PIN OR 5-PIN!

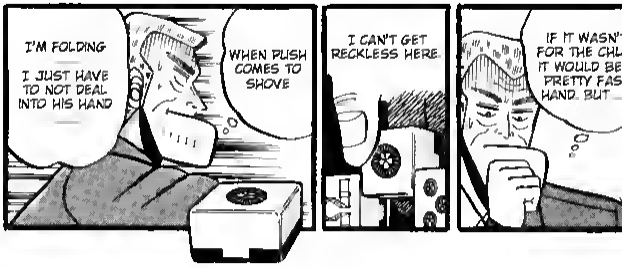
MENZEN TSUMO, PIN-FU, IPPATSU II-PEI-KOU, FOR MANGAN
HE GOT ME——!
RUINED MY CHANCE AT RYAN-PEI-KOU——
THAT 2-PIN OR 5-PIN WAIT
THIS MAN CLEARLY NOTICED THAT I MARKED THE 3 AND 7 TILES——!
THAT NEAR-RYAN-PEI-KOU WASN'T AN ACCIDENT——!


THE KEY FACTOR WAS WHERE HE SWITCHED TILES INWARD.
NATURALLY, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN LINED UP LIKE THIS BUT WHY WAS THIS THE ONLY TIME HE'S SWITCHED THEM AROUND?
IT MUST HAVE BEEN BECAUSE WITH THIS SHAPE OF HAND, OF COURSE I'D BE SUSPICIOUS OF RYAN-PEI-KOU—— IT HAS ALL THE SIGNS TO WATCH OUT FOR.
——BUT, IF HE HAS, THEN
SOUTH 3RD ROUND
IF HE'S FIGURED IT OUT, THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.

TEN SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO KNOW WHAT THE MARKS ARE
FOR INSTANCE, EVEN IF HE'S NOTICED THE 3 AND 7 TILES
I CAN STILL WORK WITH THAT!
THAT ADVANTAGE HASN'T CHANGED ——!
IN THAT CASE, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE THE 3 AND 7 TILES.
6TH TURN
ドッ
RON ..!
BUT ONLY PIN-FU——
YES. MY OVERWHELMING SUREMACY HASN'T CHANGED .!


SOUTH 4TH ROUND
THE POINT DIFFERENCE IS 22600 POINTS.

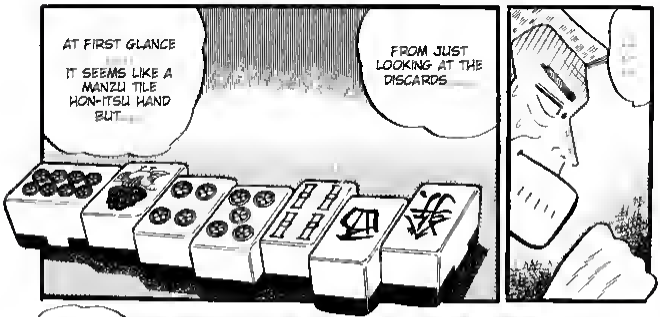

GINJI'S STARTING HAND
カチャ
カチャ

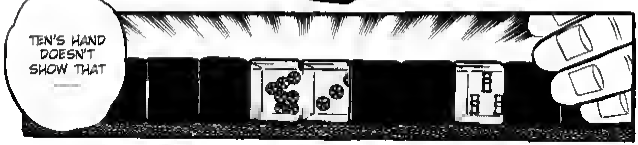

I'M FOLDING
I JUST HAVE TO NOT DEAL INTO HIS HAND
WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE
I CAN'T GET RECKLESS HERE
IF IT WASN'T FOR THE CHUN, IT WOULD BE A PRETTY FAST HAND. BUT

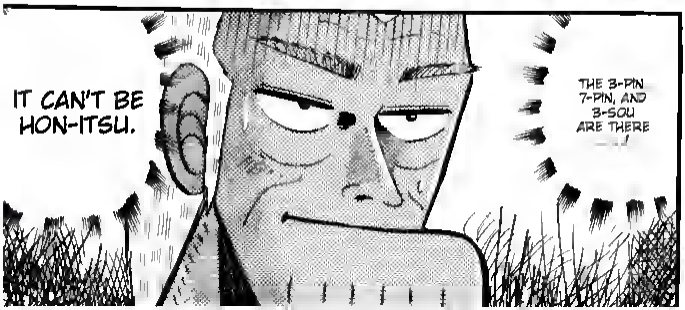
チラ…
TEN'S HAND FROM GINJI'S POINT OF VIEW
SINCE TEN NEEDS AT LEAST A HANEMAN HAND TO MAKE A COMEBACK……
NATURALLY, THERE ARE ONLY SO MANY HANDS HE CAN USE……
I CAN'T TRUST THAT IT'LL TURN INTO SEQUENCES I CAN SEE IN A FEW TURNS. BUT EITHER WAY I KNOW HE HAS THAT 7-PIN
THIS SHOULD HELP MY PREDICTIONS
ONE 7-PIN IN HIS STARTING HAND, HUH……
MAYBE SOMETHING CONNECTED TO HON-ITSU……
OR CONNECTED TO MENZEN TSUMO, TAN-YAO, PIN-FU SAN-SHOKU……?

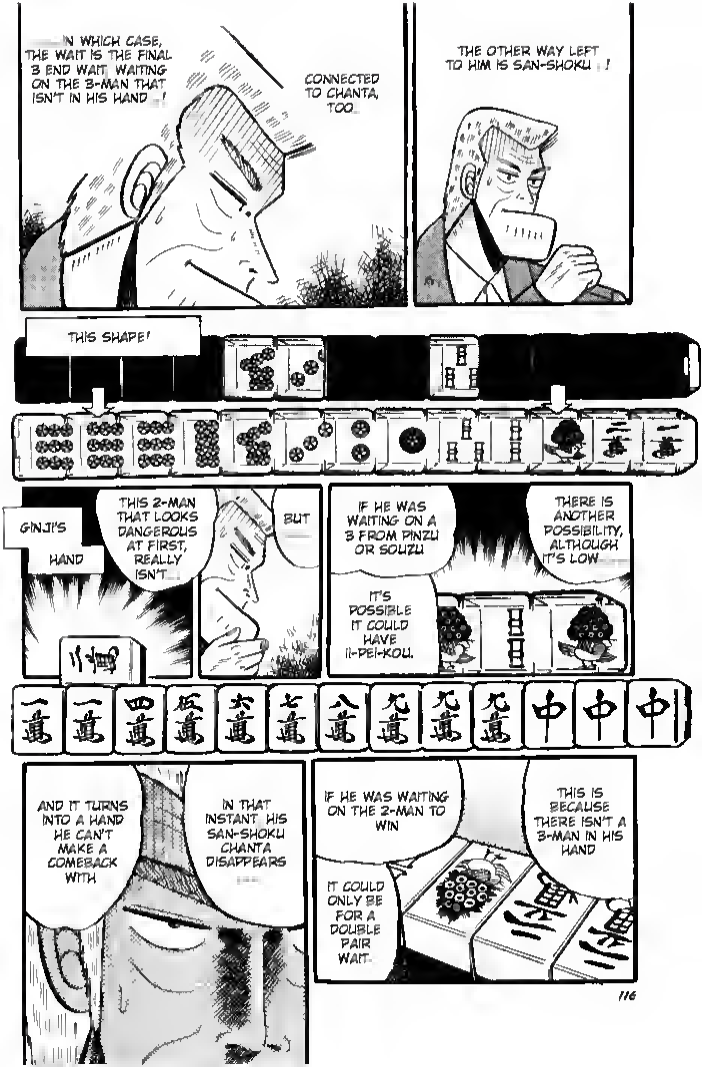
IT'LL HAVE A REAL PRETTY SHAPE TO THE TILE... IT'LL HAVE TO BE AN UNUSUALLY EASY-TO-READ HAND.
EITHER WAY
TEN'S HAND FROM GINJI'S POINT OF VIEW
3RD TURN
6TH TURN
TEN'S HAND IS GETTING BETTER AND BETTER.
AND WHEN THOSE ARE CLARIFIED BY HIS DISCARDS
BUT THAT MEANS HE'S GETTING MY 3 AND 7 MARKED TILES.
VERY CLEARLY
GOOD DRAWS.
HE DREW A 3-PIN AND 3-SOU.
RIICHI.

HERE WE GO .....


AT FIRST GLANCE
IT SEEMS LIKE A MANZU TILE HON-ITSU HAND BUT...
FROM JUST LOOKING AT THE DISCARDS...


TEN'S HAND DOESN'T SHOW THAT


IT CAN'T BE HON-ITSU.
THE 3-PIN 7-PIN, AND 3-SOU ARE THERE


IN WHICH CASE, THE WAIT IS THE FINAL 3 END WAIT WAITING ON THE 3-MAN THAT ISN'T IN HIS HAND
CONNECTED TO CHANTA, TOO
THE OTHER WAY LEFT TO HIM IS SAN-SHOKU!!
THIS SHAPE!
GINJI'S HAND
THIS 2-MAN THAT LOOKS DANGEROUS AT FIRST, REALLY ISN'T
BUT
IF HE WAS WAITING ON A 3 FROM PINZU OR SOUZU
IT'S POSSIBLE IT COULD HAVE II-PEI-KOU.
THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY, ALTHOUGH IT'S LOW
一萬 一萬 四萬 五萬 六萬 七萬 八萬 九萬 九萬 九萬 中 中 中
AND IT TURNS INTO A HAND HE CAN'T MAKE A COMEBACK WITH
IN THAT INSTANT HIS SAN-SHOKU CHANTA DISAPPEARS
IF HE WAS WAITING ON THE 2-MAN TO WIN
IT COULD ONLY BE FOR A DOUBLE PAIR WAIT.
THIS IS BECAUSE THERE ISN'T A 3-MAN IN HIS HAND

WILL PASS
THIS 2-MAN
SORRY, BUT...
HUH?
?
THAT'S THE ONE, GINJI.

ハ°ヲ..ハ°ヲ..ハ°ヲ...
ハ°ヲ..
THAT'S CRAZY...
THE LAST TWO TILES ARE THE PAIR OF 2-MAN THAT HE KEPT. THAT MAKES IT 2600 POINTS
WHY WOULD HE BE WAITING ON THE 2-MAN...?
WOULDN'T THAT MAKE HIS SAN-SHOKU CHANTA DISAPPEAR?
URGH

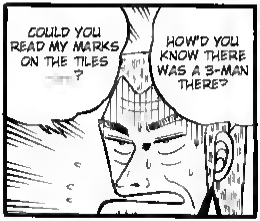
HE HAD A CLOSED WAIT ON THE 2-MAN .....!
URGH
RIICHI, IPPATSU, JUNCHAN, SAN-SHOKU... THAT'S A HANEMAN .....

HOW...?
GH.....
WHERE DID THAT 3-MAN COME FROM...?
HOW?
AND HE NEVER DREW A 3-MAN AFTER THAT...
I'M SURE THERE WASN'T A 3-MAN IN HIS HAND BACK AT THE START
GINJI...
THAT MAKES IT A COMEBACK WIN
HOW...?

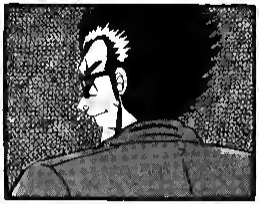
カ"タ"..
SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO COME WITH ME BACK TO MY PLACE.
YEAH
YOU PROBABLY DON'T HAVE THAT 500,000 YEN ON YOU RIGHT NOW
SURE WHY NOT...
WE'LL HAVE A VISIT
THERE'S A FEW THINGS I WANT TO TALK ABOUT, TOO...
ME TOO
.....

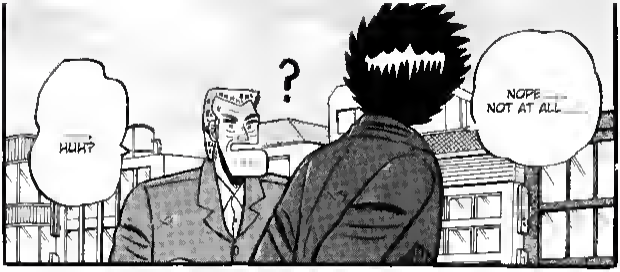
RAW
本文
事務所
メガネ田中
高宮薬局
JOKER

SINCE THE START OF THE SOUTH ROUND
WHEN DID YOU FIRST NOTICE THE MARKED 3 AND 7 TILES ...?

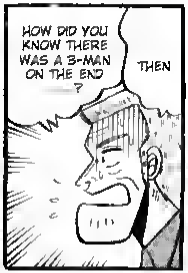

COULD YOU READ MY MARKS ON THE TILES ...?
HOW'D YOU KNOW THERE WAS A 3-MAN THERE?

WHERE'D YOU PULL THAT 3-MAN FROM?
THE END OF THE WALL IN FRONT OF ME



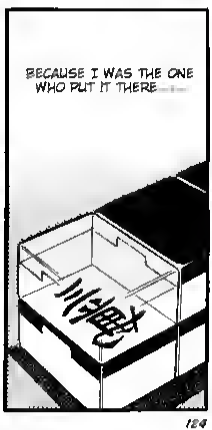

HUH?
?
NOPE... NOT AT ALL...

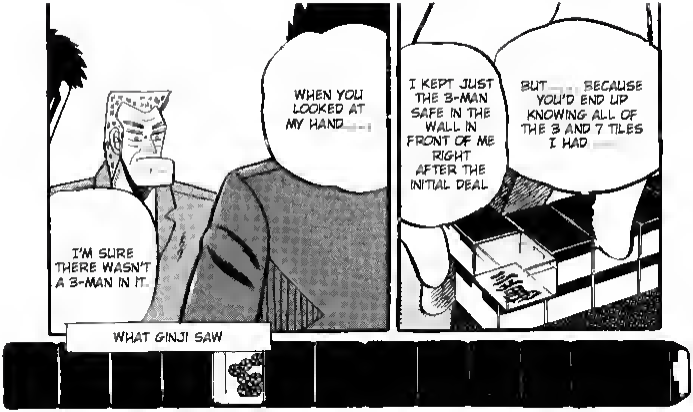
I KNEW THAT...

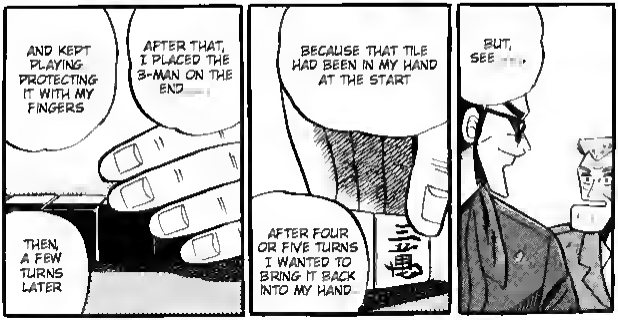

HOW DID YOU KNOW THERE WAS A 3-MAN ON THE END...?
THEN

IN OTHER WORDS, THAT 3-MAN WAS ALREADY IN MY STARTING HAND FROM WHEN THE TILES WERE DEALT OUT...
LET ME EXPLAIN IT ONE STEP AT A TIME...

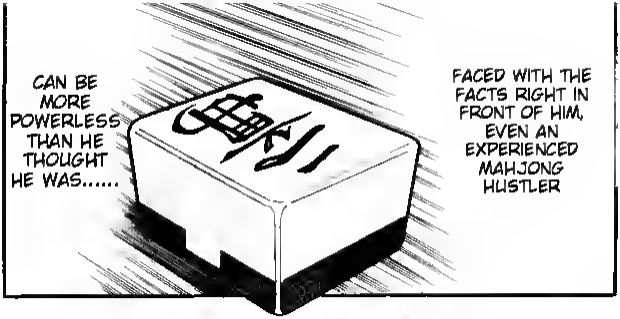
HUH?
HEH HEH...

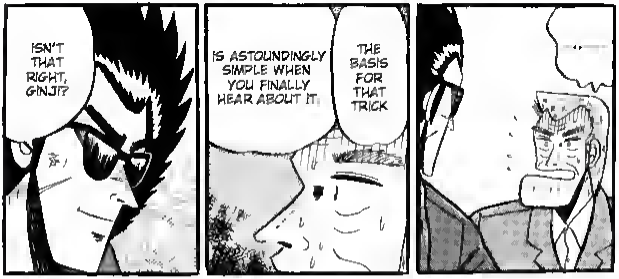

BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE WHO PUT IT THERE...

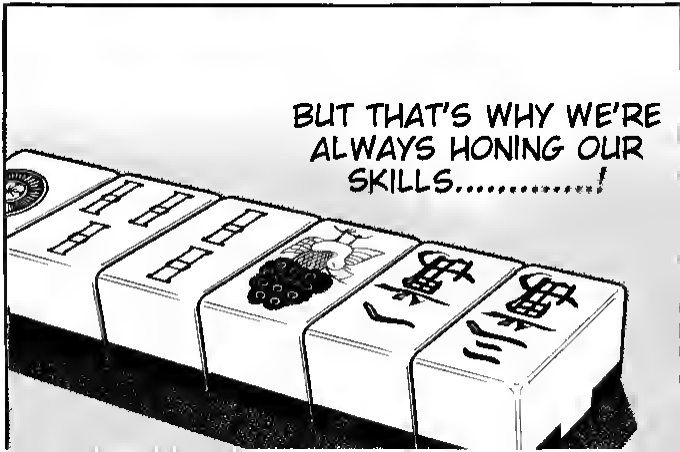

WHEN YOU LOOKED AT MY HAND—!
I'M SURE THERE WASN'T A 3-MAN IN IT.
I KEPT JUST THE 3-MAN SAFE IN THE WALL IN FRONT OF ME RIGHT AFTER THE INITIAL DEAL
BUT—, BECAUSE YOU'D END UP KNOWING ALL OF THE 3 AND 7 TILES I HAD
WHAT GINJI SAW


AND KEPT PLAYING PROTECTING IT WITH MY FINGERS
AFTER THAT, I PLACED THE 3-MAN ON THE END—
THEN, A FEW TURNS LATER
BECAUSE THAT TILE HAD BEEN IN MY HAND AT THE START
AFTER FOUR OR FIVE TURNS I WANTED TO BRING IT BACK INTO MY HAND
BUT, SEE—.

TO STRIKE YOU DOWN WITH—!
IT TURNED INTO A CLOSED MIDDLE WAIT IN MY HAND


CAN BE MORE POWERLESS THAN HE THOUGHT HE WAS.....
FACED WITH THE FACTS RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM, EVEN AN EXPERIENCED MAHJONG HUSTLER


ISN'T THAT RIGHT, GINJI?
IS ASTOUNDINGLY SIMPLE WHEN YOU FINALLY HEAR ABOUT IT.
THE BASIS FOR THAT TRICK


BUT THAT'S WHY WE'RE ALWAYS HONING OUR SKILLS.....!

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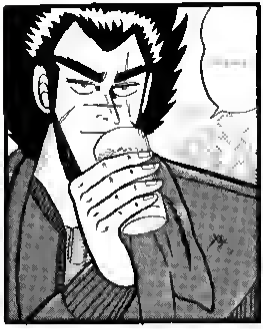
CHAPTER 35
TOWARDS THE EAST-WEST SHOWDOWN

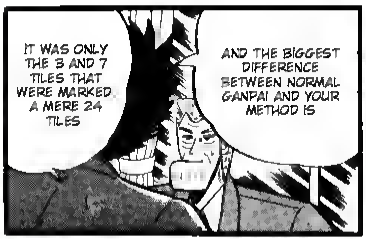
BEER

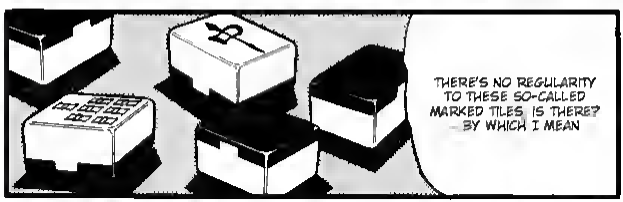


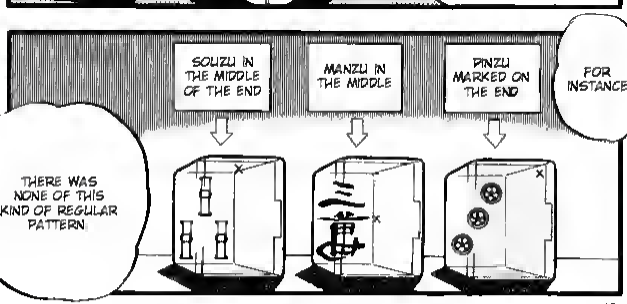
I'M GETTING OLD, TOO
I'D PLANNED TO KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT AND CARRY THE SECRET OF MY MARKED TILES WITH ME TO MY GRAVE, BUT
.....EVEN IF SOMEONE HAD PUT TEN MILLION YEN IN FRONT OF ME
コト‥
IT'S CROSSED MY MIND A FEW TIMES
LATELY, I'VE BEEN THINKING I SHOULD TELL SOMEONE
.....TEN, WASN'T IT ——?
SINCE YOU'RE ALREADY VAGUELY AWARE OF IT
WELL.....
HOW MUCH DID YOU FIGURE OUT...?

BUT EVEN THOUGH I NOTICED THEM THEY DIDN'T MAKE ANY SENSE
THERE WERE SOME TINY SCRATCHES, SURE.

.....


IT WAS ONLY THE 3 AND 7 TILES THAT WERE MARKED. A MERE 24 TILES
AND THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NORMAL GANPAI AND YOUR METHOD IS

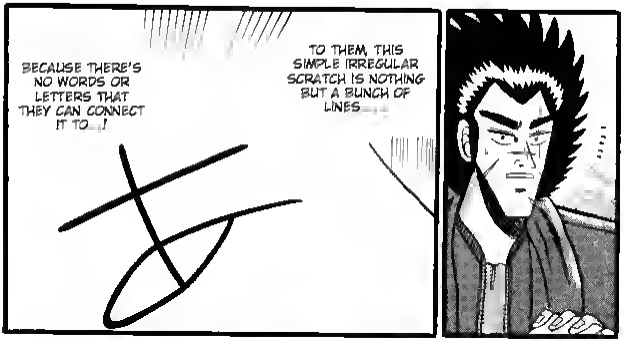

THERE'S NO REGULARITY TO THESE SO-CALLED MARKED TILES. IS THERE? BY WHICH I MEAN


SOUZU IN THE MIDDLE OF THE END
MANZU IN THE MIDDLE
PINZU MARKED ON THE END
FOR INSTANCE
THERE WAS NONE OF THIS KIND OF REGULAR PATTERN.

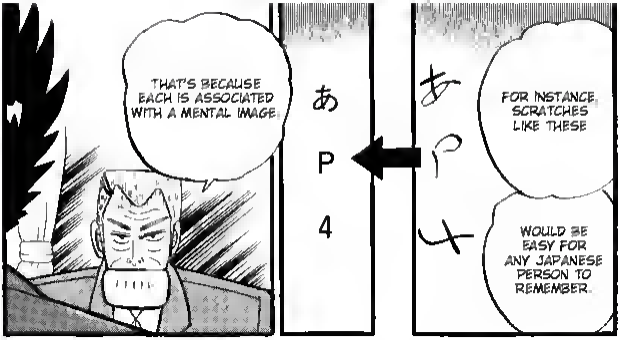
AND IF YOU COULD FULLY MEMORIZE THE MARK FOR EACH OF THOSE 24 TILES THAT WOULD BE THE BEST ROUTE
THE MOST... CERTAIN WAY TO DO IT.....!
SO FIRST OFF, IT WAS ONLY 24 TILES
IT'S EASY FOR AN OPPONENT TO USE IT TO THEIR ADVANTAGE TOO...
SINCE THIS KIND OF MARK IS EASY TO TRACK DOWN

WHAT I NOTICED
WAS SOMETHING THAT CAME UP ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO...
BUT THE PROBLEM IS, HOW?
EXACTLY
I WAS PLAYING MAHJONG IN A MAHJONG PARLOR LIKE ALWAYS
WHEN SUDDENLY I NOTICED THERE WAS A TILE THAT WAS SCRATCHED UP...
IT WAS A SUBTLE BUT EASY TO MEMORIZE MARK
"A"?
LIKE THIS...
EXACTLY
THE MARK ON THAT TILE WAS.....

NOW WHAT ABOUT FOREIGNERS...?
SO WE CONNECT IT BACK TO THE HIRAGANA CHARACTER FOR "A"
BUT DON'T ACTUALLY TURN IT INTO LANGUAGE
BUT... THAT'S BECAUSE WE'RE JAPANESE...
THAT'S THE ASSOCIATION WE MAKE RIGHT AWAY
YES...


BECAUSE THERE'S NO WORDS OR LETTERS THAT THEY CAN CONNECT IT TO...!
TO THEM, THIS SIMPLE IRREGULAR SCRATCH IS NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF LINES...

AN IDEA FLASHED INTO MY MIND.....!
WHEN I THOUGHT OF THAT


FOR INSTANCE, SCRATCHES LIKE THESE
WOULD BE EASY FOR ANY JAPANESE PERSON TO REMEMBER.
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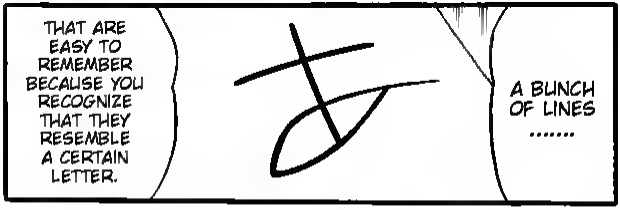
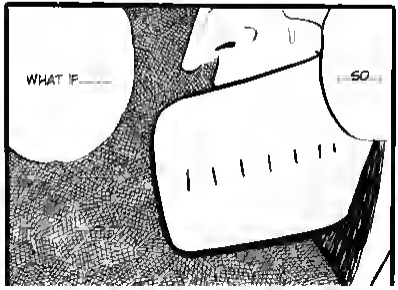
4
THAT'S BECAUSE EACH IS ASSOCIATED WITH A MENTAL IMAGE.

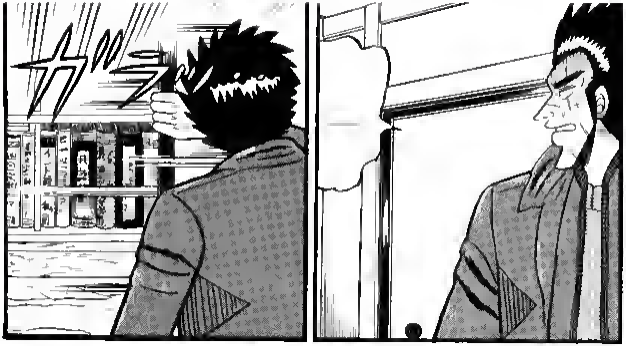

A BUNCH OF LINES .....
THAT ARE EASY TO REMEMBER BECAUSE YOU RECOGNIZE THAT THEY RESEMBLE A CERTAIN LETTER.

I SEE.

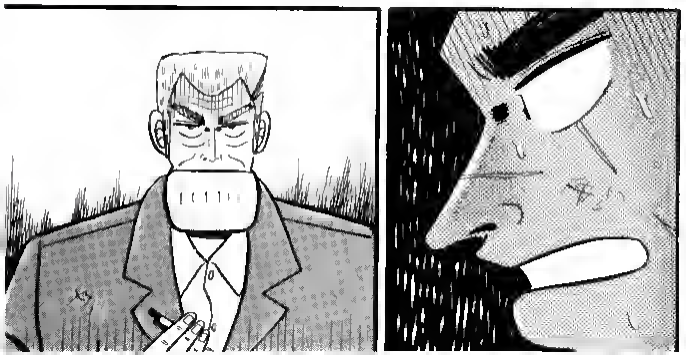

WHAT IF.....
SO

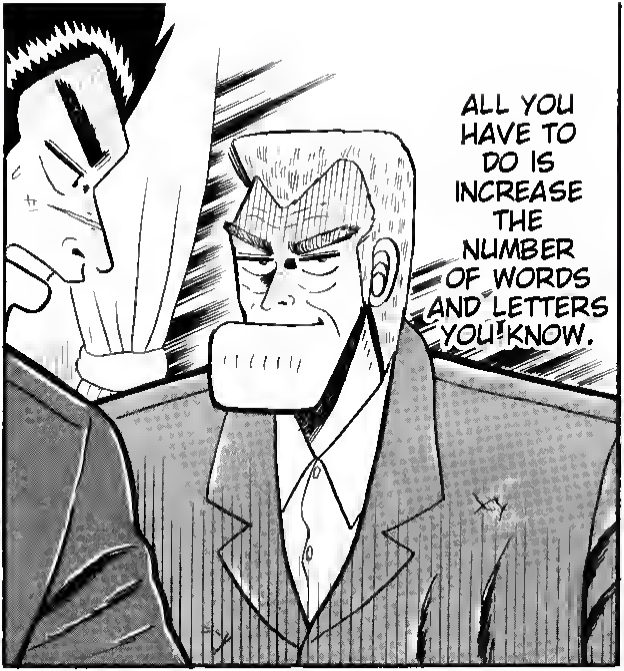
WHAT IF THERE WAS A MAN WHO COULD RECOGNIZE THE LETTERS FROM DOZENS OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD...?
MALAY, ARABIC, THAI AND KOREAN, AND SO ON...

THIS LETTER HAS THE MEANING OF 'EAR' IN THAI, BUT...
ฯ
ฯ
...LIKE THIS...
カチッ
IN OTHER WORDS
BUT FOR THOSE WHO KNOW IT... IT'S AN EASILY UNDERSTOOD MARK
IT WOULDN'T MAKE ANY IMPACT ON A NORMAL JAPANESE PERSON.
EVEN IF THERE WAS THAT KIND OF SCRATCH ON THE BACK OF A TILE
A MERE SCRATCH.



*ALL LANGUAGE DICTIONARIES AND GUIDES SOME LANGUAGES LISTED INCLUDE THAI, EGYPTIAN HINDI, SANSKRIT AND ARABIC

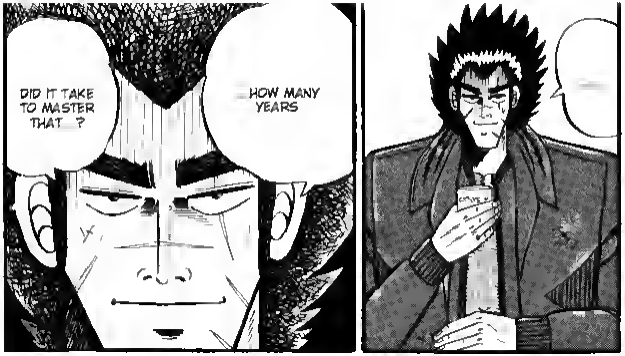



ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS INCREASE THE NUMBER OF WORDS AND LETTERS YOU KNOW.

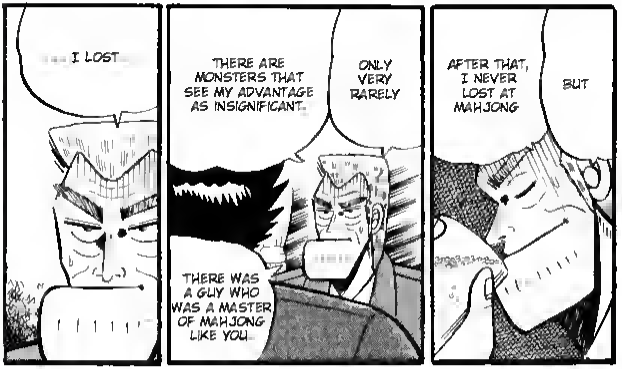
IT'S NOT NECESSARY TO MEMORIZE THE MEANING OF THE LETTERS AT ALL.
ASIAN AND ARABIC LETTERS ARE BETTER.
JUST ASSIGN THOSE LETTERS SOUNDS FROM JAPAN'S SYLLABARY.
THOSE CAN'T BE USED BECAUSE OF THE ALPHABET.
BUT ENGLISH, DUTCH, RUSSIAN

IS PROBABLY TWENTY TIMES THAT OF A NORMAL PERSON
MY ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE THEM
YOU CAN JUST RECOGNIZE THEM AS WORDS INSIDE YOURSELF
IN OTHER WORDS
ARE WORDS THAT HAVE ALL THE MEANING I NEED
TINY SCRATCHES AND BITS OF GRIME ON THE TILES
I'M AMAZED

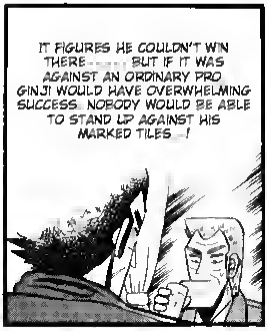
SO...
THERE AREN'T ANY MARKS LIKE THAT...
BUT USING FRESH TILES
THAT'S WHY, IN GENERAL, I DON'T NEED TO MAKE ANY NEW SCRATCHES...
EVERYONE ELSE JUST SEES A BIT OF A SCUFF MARK...
THOSE ARE WHAT I SEE...
I CARVE IN WORDS FROM A MALAY GUIDEBOOK THAT NOBODY WOULD EVER KNOW...
IT CAN'T BE HELPED
I SEE...


DID IT TAKE TO MASTER THAT...?
HOW MANY YEARS

FIVE YEARS OR SO
WELL


I LOST
THERE ARE MONSTERS THAT SEE MY ADVANTAGE AS INSIGNIFICANT.
ONLY VERY RARELY
THERE WAS A GUY WHO WAS A MASTER OF MAHJONG LIKE YOU.
AFTER THAT, I NEVER LOST AT MAHJONG
BUT

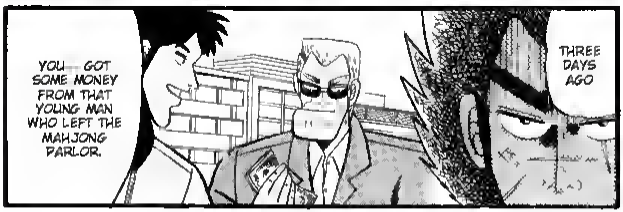
THE ONLY TIMES I LOST IN THE LAST 15 YEARS WERE TO YOU AND TO THAT MAN.....
8 OR 9 YEARS AGO, I WAS BEATEN BY THAT AKAGI FELLOW.....

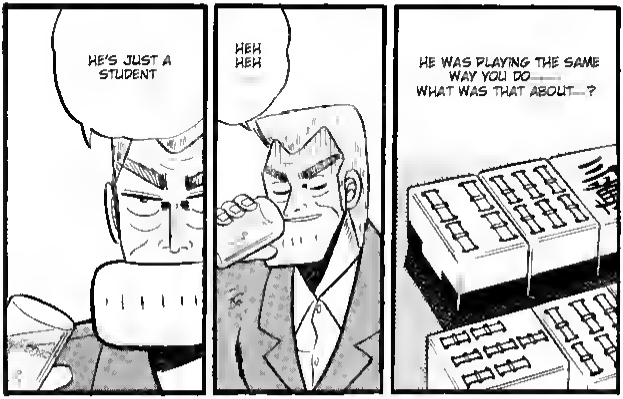

IT FIGURES HE COULDN'T WIN THERE..... BUT IF IT WAS AGAINST AN ORDINARY PRO GINJI WOULD HAVE OVERWHELMING SUCCESS. NOBODY WOULD BE ABLE TO STAND UP AGAINST HIS MARKED TILES...!

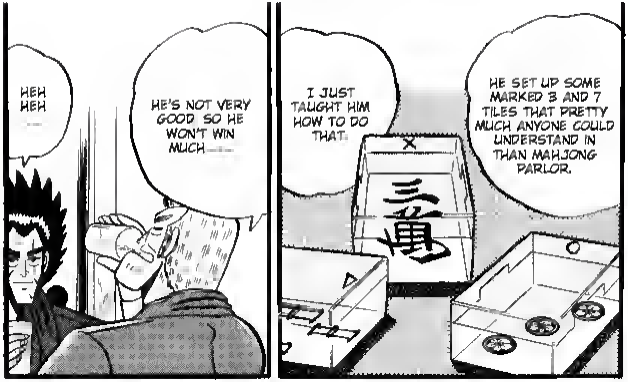
AKAGI'S JUST EVIL TO PLAY AGAINST——

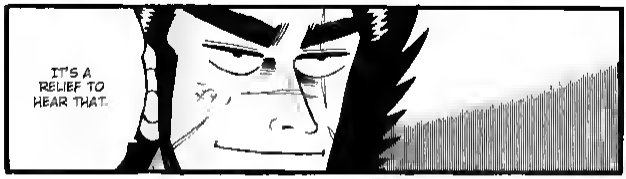
WITH HIS SKILL NEARLY AT ITS PEAK.....
A MASTER ARTISAN

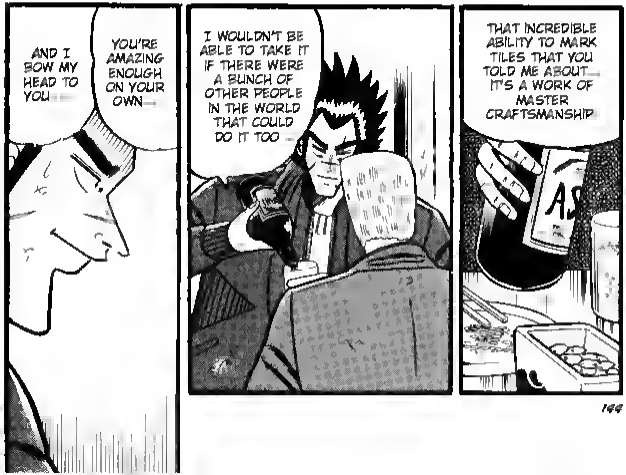
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING...?


YOU... GOT SOME MONEY FROM THAT YOUNG MAN WHO LEFT THE MAHJONG PARLOR.
THREE DAYS AGO


HE'S JUST A STUDENT
HEH HEH
HE WAS PLAYING THE SAME WAY YOU DO... WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT...?


HEH HEH
HE'S NOT VERY GOOD SO HE WON'T WIN MUCH
I JUST TAUGHT HIM HOW TO DO THAT.
HE SET UP SOME MARKED 3 AND 7 TILES THAT PRETTY MUCH ANYONE COULD UNDERSTAND IN THAN MAHJONG PARLOR.


IT'S A RELIEF TO HEAR THAT.


AND I BOW MY HEAD TO YOU.
YOU'RE AMAZING ENOUGH ON YOUR OWN.
I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO TAKE IT IF THERE WERE A BUNCH OF OTHER PEOPLE IN THE WORLD THAT COULD DO IT TOO.
THAT INCREDIBLE ABILITY TO MARK TILES THAT YOU TOLD ME ABOUT... IT'S A WORK OF MASTER CRAFTSMANSHIP.

...
HEH HEH
I HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO ASK YOU, BUT...
GINJI.

AND THERE'S GOING TO BE A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN THEM
THE UNDERWORLD PROS OF EAST AND WEST ARE GOING TO BE GATHERING
IN A FEW DAYS...
I'M NOT SURE IF YOU HEARD ABOUT IT...?

TO EAST'S SIDE.....?
WILL YOU LEND THAT GODLY SKILL OF YOURS .....

BUT...
IT PUTS ME IN AN AWKWARD POSITION.
I'D HEARD OF A LITTLE FEUD BETWEEN EAST AND WEST...
IT WOULD BE A HUGE MISTAKE TO RISK HAVING THE BASIS FOR MY LITTLE TRICK UNCOVERED ON THAT GRAND STAGE.
AFTER THAT, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COVER IT UP ANYMORE.
I'D...
PROBABLY BE BARRED FROM ANY MAHJONG PARLOR I WENT TO.
THIS TRICK IS HOW I EARN MY MEALS.....
A KIND OF PENSION...

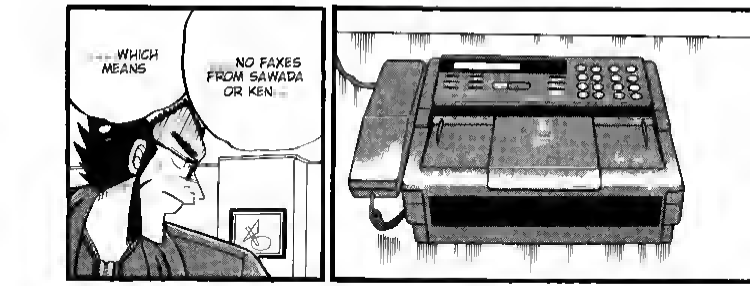
OLD WARRIORS DON'T DIE THEY JUST DISAPPEAR.

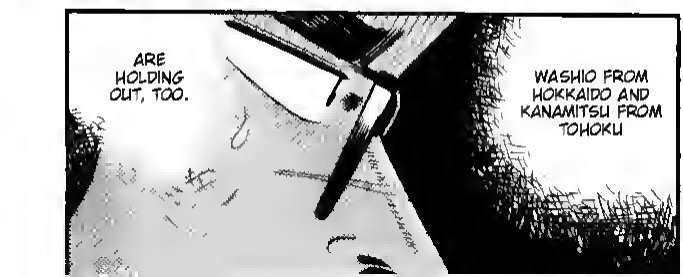
I'LL HAVE TO DECLINE.

SO RIGHT NOW... IT WOULD BE A HUGE MISTAKE FOR ME TO JOIN THE FIGHT.

...IT'S NOT MY TIME TO SHINE ANYMORE.

I DIDN'T GET GINJI OR AKAGI...!
EVEN THOUGH THE SHOWDOWN WITH WEST IS SOON
THIS IS THE WORST


WHICH MEANS
NO FAXES FROM SAWADA OR KEN.


ARE HOLDING OUT, TOO.
WASHIO FROM HOKKAIDO AND KANAMITSU FROM TOHOKU

IN THE END, KEN IS STILL JUST SMALL FRY.....
WHO WILL HAVE TO FIGHT WEST...!
IN THE WORST CASE, IT'S JUST KEN AND ME
I'LL HAVE TO TAKE DOWN SEVEN OF WEST'S STRONGEST PLAYERS...!
THE REALITY IS THAT, ALONE,

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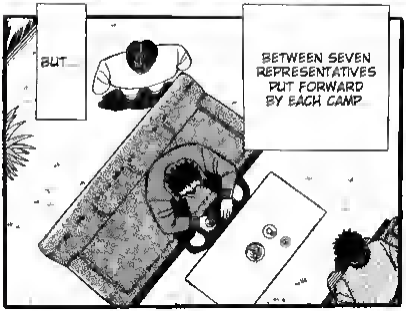
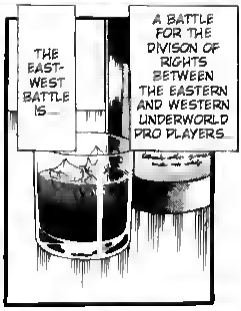
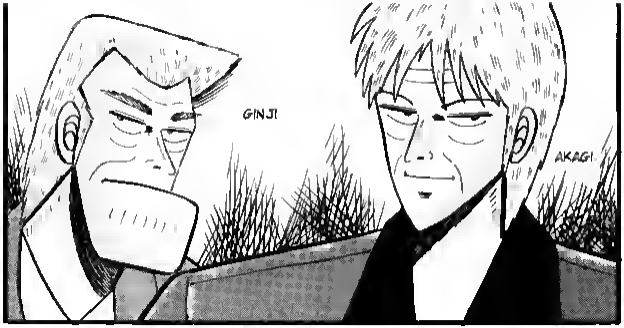
CHAPTER 36
THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EAST-WEST SHOWDOWN


BUT...
BETWEEN SEVEN REPRESENTATIVES PUT FORWARD BY EACH CAMP


THE EAST-WEST BATTLE IS...
A BATTLE FOR THE DIVISON OF RIGHTS BETWEEN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN UNDERWORLD PRO PLAYERS...

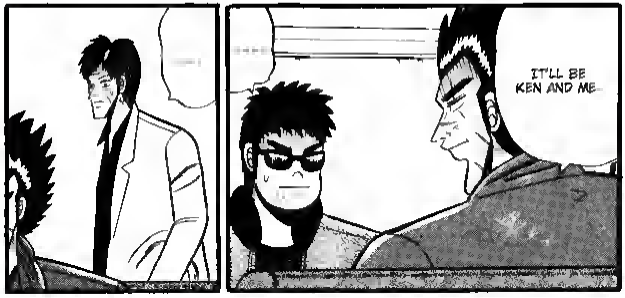
JUST TEN AND KEN.
ON THE NIGHT BEFORE THE MATCH, THE EAST CAMP ONLY HAD TWO PLAYERS.


GINJI
AKAGI

WASHIO FROM HOKKAIDO
KANAMITSU FROM THE TOHOKU REGION

I DIDN'T THINK WE'D BE IN THIS BAD A SITUATION
HONESTLY
HEH HEH
IN THE END - THEY COULDN'T GET A SINGLE ONE OF THEM TO JOIN THEM

NO...
THERE'S NO POINT, NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT
TO GET ANOTHER TWO OR THREE DAYS
WE COULD TRY TO NEGOTIATE WITH WEST
WHAT NOW, TEN...?
SO...


IT'LL BE KEN AND ME

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, SAWADA
WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH POWER ON OUR SIDE
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GREAT IF I COULD HAVE BROUGHT AT LEAST KANAMITSU BUT...
SORRY...
YOU SEE, NOBODY KNOWS WHERE HE WENT.

NATURALLY, IT'S NOT SOMETHING KEN'S RESPONSIBLE FOR EITHER.

I'M NOT GOOD AT MAHJONG

ME...
カラン
THIS TIME, THE ONE WHO COULDN'T GET EVERYONE TOGETHER WAS—

IN OTHER WORDS, THE PROBLEM IS ONE OF CHARISMA...

IF I WAS ... I SHOULD NATURALLY BE ABLE TO DRAW PEOPLE TOGETHER.

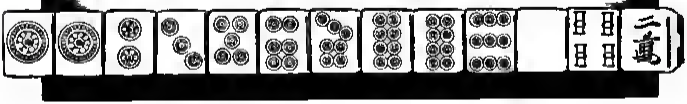
IN THE LAST ROUND
WHEN YOU'RE DEALT THAT HAND
AND RIGHT NOW, IT'S THE STARTING HAND FOR THE LAST ROUND
LIKE A STARTING HAND
GETTING THE PEOPLE TOGETHER BEFORE THE MATCH IS
IS IT A HAND YOU CAN MAKE A COMEBACK WITH?
OR IS IT GARBAGE?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I THINK
BUT
WHICH-EVER HAND YOU GET
THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD SAY IT'S LUCK OR FATE
NO AMOUNT OF TIME IS GOING TO HELP THEM AND THEY MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP ON MAHJONG
IF PEOPLE REALLY THINK THAT WAY

THE KIND OF GUY THAT GETS A GARBAGE HAND IN THE LAST ROUND IS JUST GARBAGE, IN THE END

I THINK THAT'S WHAT REAL ABILITY IS ABOUT

GETTING A GOOD HAND AT THE VERY END OF THE GAME.....

SOMEONE WITH REAL ABILITY IS SURE TO BE BLESSED WITH A GOOD HAND IN THE LAST ROUND.

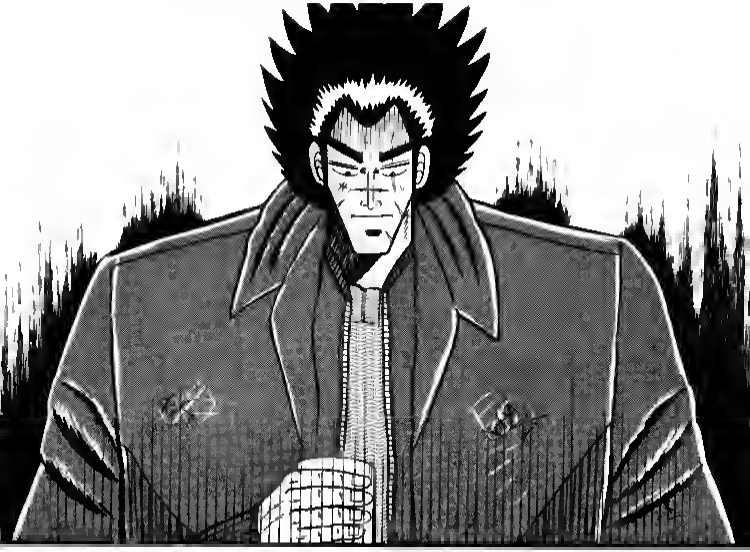


IS ALL... A CONSEQUENCE OF THAT MY MAHJONG PLAYER'S CHARISMA

SO, THIS BITTER RESULT, THAT KEN AND I ARE THE ONLY PLAYERS FOR EAST THIS TIME

THAT'S WHAT THE CHARISMA OF A MAHJONG PLAYER IS.....

I'M SECOND-RATE



I DON'T...
HARADA HAS THAT CHARISMA...
IT'S TOO BAD...

THE POWER OF MONEY, SET AGAINST A BACKGROUND OF VIOLENCE... HARADA'S STRENGTH HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL...

I BET...
THAT THE MEMBERS OF WEST WOULD AGREE...

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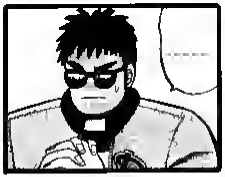
コンッ…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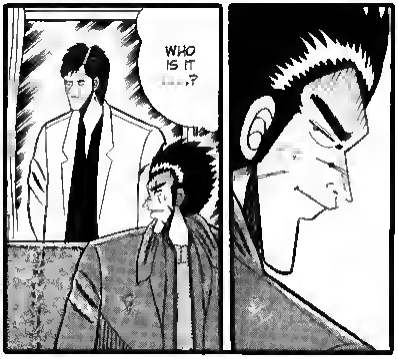
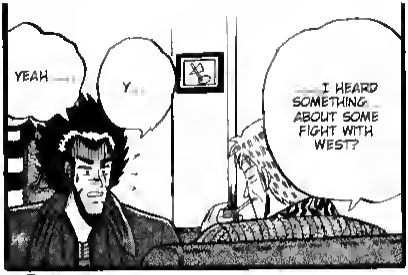

WHO IS IT……?

THAT THE KNOCK ON THE DOOR WOULD BE THE BEGINING OF A MIRACULOUS EVENING…
NOR THE OTHER TWO KNEW
NEITHER TEN

コミ
コミ
I SAID, WHO IS IT——?
.....
.....
IF YOU DON'T STOP FOOLING AROUND, YOU'RE GOING TO GET HURT.
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT LIKE THIS.
D/MMIT
.....
ガチャッ
.....
URGH...

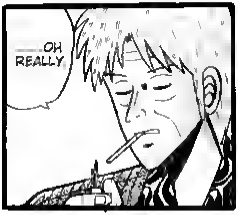
AKAGI
SHIGERU

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
A...AKAGI
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!
AAAHHH, I'M SO TIRED
HEY
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, TEN...
I'VE BEEN ON THE GOLF COURSE FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS AND FINALLY BROKE 90
GOLF'S A PRETTY TOUGH GAME
HAWAII


YEAH...
Y...
...I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT SOME FIGHT WITH WEST?

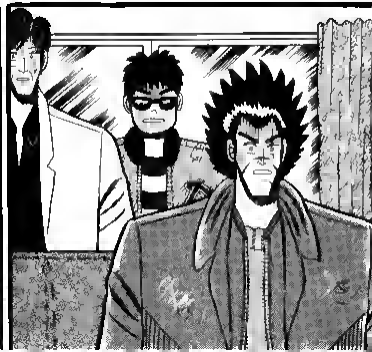
BY THE WAY
TEN...

ABOUT THE EAST PLAYERS


...OH REALLY

THERE BETTER BE A SPOT OPEN FOR ME .....

OF COURSE THERE IS...!
THAT'S WHY WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU UP UNTIL NOW...!



WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO ASK...!
IF AKAGI'S IN, HE'S WORTH A HUNDRED PLAYERS!
THINGS ARE LOOKING UP...!
AND NOW... WITH OUR REP LIMIT OF SEVEN PEOPLE
WITH AKAGI IN, WE'VE GOT THREE NOW...!
WE'LL GIVE WEST A SURPRISE!
HANG ON...
...WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THREE OUT OF SEVEN PEOPLE?
WELL...
WE COULDN'T GET THE REP PLAYERS WE HAD OUR EYES ON...
OUT OF THE SEVEN PEOPLE WE NEED, WE'VE FINALLY GOT THREE NOW WITH YOU INCLUDED...
BUT... I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT!
HUH?
YOU STILL NEED QUITE A FEW...
HEY...!
COME ON IN

WASHIO
FROM
HOKKAIDO
KANAMITSU
FROM
TOHOKU

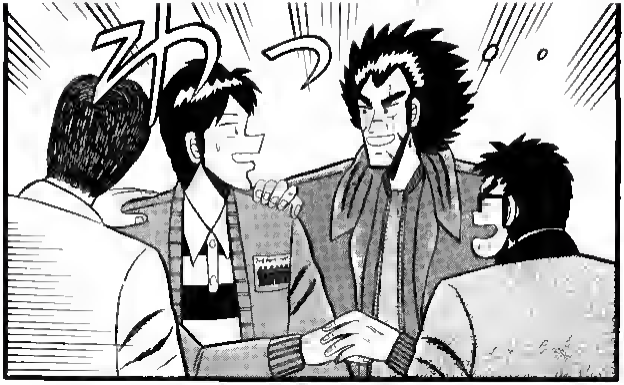
YEAH! YEAH!
THIS IS GREAT!
I'M SURE THEY'LL DO THE JOB
WE WENT WITH AKAGI TO HAWAII
WHERE...?
WHERE DID YOU RUN OFF TO...?
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU TWO!
...THIS MAKES FIVE PEOPLE...!
OF COURSE NOT!
YOU'VE GOT NO PROBLEM WITH THESE TWO, RIGHT?
THIS IS GREAT!!
HAWAII'S A NICE PLACE TO GO FOR AN OLD MAN LIKE ME
JAPANESE WOMEN THESE DAYS... THEY'RE SO COLD

I HEARD HE DESPERATELY WANTED TO JOIN EAST...
IN HAWAII THERE WAS SOME STRANGE KID FOLLOWING ME AROUND...
IT'D BE NICE IF YOU LET HIM TRY FOR A BIT...
THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT, TEN...
...NOW
WILL YOU LET THE KID JOIN YOUR LITTLE GROUP HERE?
HOW ABOUT IT?...
THEN, COME ON IN!
OH, REALLY...
YEAH...
IF HE'S OKAY WITH YOU, WE'VE GOT NO OBJECTIONS

IT'S BEEN A WHILE

HEH HEH
HIROYUKI!

DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO WIN.
JUST LIKE YOU USED TO SAY, TEN.
WELL... I DON'T REALLY LIKE FOOLING YOU LIKE THIS BUT...
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE HARD FOR YOU TO TURN DOWN A REQUEST FROM AKAGI...
JUST LIKE I FIGURED, TEN
THIS KID...
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT
WHAT DO YOU THINK.....?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO, TEN...
どんっ
IS OUR SIXTH PLAYER!

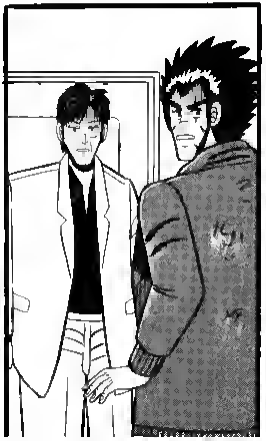


THERE'S STILL ONE LAST PERSON

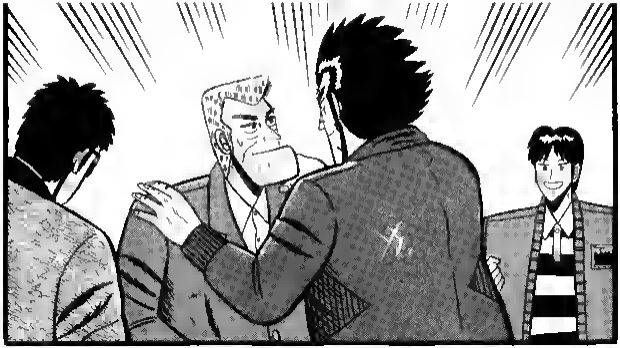
NO PROBLEM!
WE CAN DO IT!

COME ON IN!

IT SOUNDED LIKE HE GAVE YOU A BIT OF TROUBLE, BUT I UNDERSTAND HE DECIDED TO JOIN IN



GINJI...!
IT WAS A BIT SILLY FOR ME TO SAY THAT
OLD WARRIORS DON'T DIE... THEY JUST DISAPPEAR...
...
THAT'S SEVEN PEOPLE!
OLD WARRIORS DO DIE...!
GINJI...
AND I'LL BE A GAMBLER UNTIL THE DAY I DIE... AND IF I HAVE TO SURVIVE ON A BIT OF SMALL CHANGE, SO BE IT...!



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さわ

さわっ
AWE-SOME!
WE'VE GOT THE GREATEST PLAYERS!
THERE'S NO WAY WE'LL LOSE TO WEST NOW!

KIND OF LIKE...

TEN...
HOW ARE YOU FEELING NOW...?

EVEN THOUGH IT WAS A TERRIBLE STARTING HAND.....
IT FEELS LIKE IT COULD BE A YAKUMAN IN ANOTHER FOUR OR FIVE TURNS
.....
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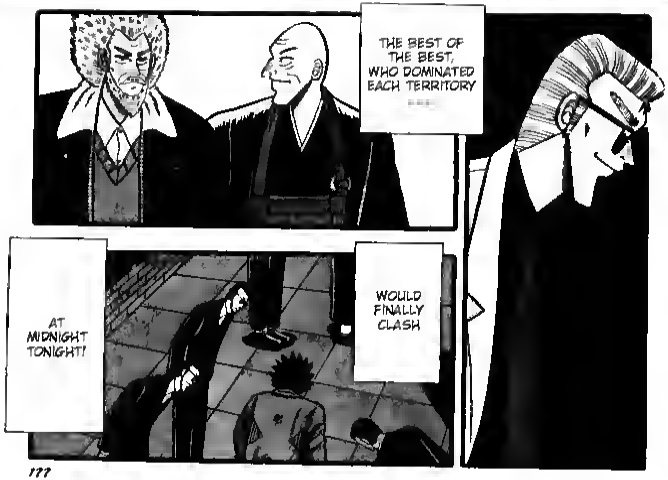
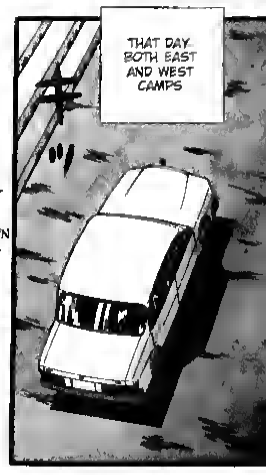
CHAPTER 37
THE EAST-WEST SHOWDOWN BEGINS!



GATHERED AT A CERTAIN HOTEL



EAST SIDE
WAITING ROOM
THERE'S A FEW THINGS I NEED TO EXPLAIN AHEAD OF TIME
WE STILL HAVE SOME TIME BEFORE THE MATCH BUT
THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE EARLY

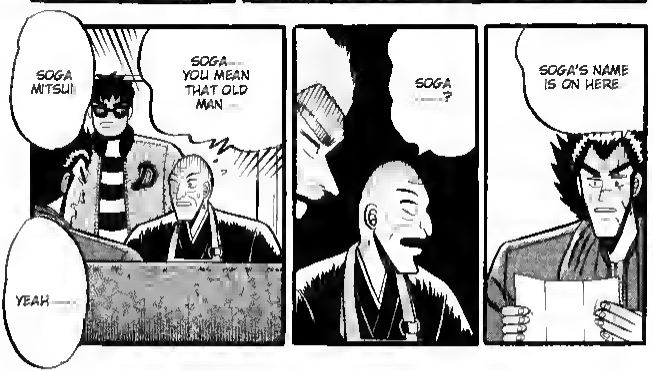
WILL START BY TAKING THE FOURTEEN PEOPLE FROM EAST AND WEST AND NARROWING THEM DOWN TO EIGHT.
A SORT OF QUALIFYING ROUND.
THIS BATTLE
AS WE AGREED WITH WEST BEFOREHAND
THERE ARE A FEW DIFFERENCES IN THE QUALIFYING ROUND.
I THINK THE SHOWDOWN BATTLE WILL PROBABLY BE SETTLED ACCORDING TO THE TOTAL NUMBER OF POINTS BUT
THEN THOSE REMAINING EIGHT WILL GO ON TO THE SHOWDOWN ROUND.
IN THE FIRST HAN-CHAN THREE PEOPLE OUT OF FOURTEEN WILL BE ELIMINATED.
WHEN THE HAN-CHAN SESSION IS OVER, ONE PERSON WILL BE REMOVED FROM EACH TABLE, DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF POINTS EACH PLAYER HAS
SIX PEOPLE WILL BE SELECTED FROM BOTH EAST AND WEST
FIRST IN THE BEGINNING ROUND
TO BE SEATED AT THREE TABLES

YOU JUST HAVE TO AVOID COMING IN LAST
THE METHOD BEHIND IT IS SIMPLE
IN OTHER WORDS, THE RULES STATE THAT THE PERSON IN LAST PLACE IS UNCONDITIONALLY REMOVED FROM THE GAME
YES
AS FAR AS THIS ROUND GOES
GETTING FIRST PLACE IS MEANINGLESS ...?
ざわっ…
I WOULDN'T PRESUME TO FORCE ANYONE HERE TO
NATURALLY, THIS MEANS THE TWO PEOPLE AT EACH TABLE COULD COOPERATE SOMEWHAT BUT
I'LL LEAVE IT UP TO YOU
IF YOU FINISH SECOND OR THIRD, THAT'S FINE
JUST AVOID LAST PLACE...
EVEN IF ONE PERSON FROM EAST TAKES THE LEAD, WE CAN'T HAVE ANOTHER PERSON COMING IN LAST

A TYPICAL SURVIVAL BATTLE
THE GOAL OF THIS BATTLE IS... SORT OF TO SIFT OUT THE PEOPLE WHO SHOULD BE KEPT FOR THE SHOWDOWN ROUND...
TO GET RID OF... THE ONES THAT ARE HOPELESS
RULES WHERE THE ONE IN LAST PLACE IS TAKEN OUT...
I SEE...
EVERYONE WILL MAKE IT THROUGH
THE FIRST GAME WILL BE THE SIX PEOPLE HERE
LAST NIGHT, HE ASKED TO NOT BE IN THE FIRST ROUND SINCE HE'LL BE LATE DUE TO SOME MINOR BUSINESS...
AND AKAGI ISN'T HERE YET...
トン トン・・・
ざわ・・・・
EACH ONE OF YOU... STAY ALIVE...

AND THEY ARE...
IT'S THE LIST OF WEST'S PLAYERS.
NANGOU, FROM HAKATA IN KYUSHU.
AND AKUTSU FROM SANIN, HUH.
OH...
YEAH. THE ONES WE EXPECTED ARE ON THERE.
HUH?

WHAT'S WRONG——?
?


SOGA MITSUI
SOGA—— YOU MEAN THAT OLD MAN——
YEAH——
SOGA——?
SOGA'S NAME IS ON HERE

WHO'S THAT?

SOGA...?

THOSE DIRTY BAS-TARDS...
THEY WENT SO FAR AS TO DRAG
THAT OLD MAN INTO THIS?...

HE MIGHT BE TOUGH EVEN FOR AKAGI SHIGERU!

AND NOW... I GUESS I CAN SAY THIS SINCE HE'S NOT HERE BUT

HE WAS LIKE THE RULER OF THE UNDERWORLD
...IT'S BEEN TEN YEARS ALREADY... SINCE HIS REIGN
BACK THEN NOBODY EVER WON AGAINST HIM...

THEY WERE WORKING IN THE UNDERWORLD AT DIFFERENT TIMES AND MISSED EACH OTHER SO THEY NEVER ACTUALLY CLASHED
...THOUGH THAT'S NOT THE RIGHT WAY TO SAY IT...
...WHAT IN THE...?
JUST... THE FACT IS THAT A LOT SAID SOGA HAD THE ADVANTAGE...
HONESTLY, NOBODY CARED...
THE TIME HE REIGNED IN THE UNDERWORLD WAS ACTUALLY UNEXPECTEDLY SHORT— ABOUT THREE YEARS.
AKAGI STOOD OUT IN THAT LIFESTYLE AND WAS TRULY BRILLIANT ...HE LEFT A STRONG IMPRESSION ON PEOPLE BUT...
HE CARVED OUT QUIET AND SURE VICTORIES FOR HIMSELF...
HE DIDN'T HAVE AKAGI'S BRILLIANCE BUT...
FOR THOSE TEN YEARS HE NEVER LOST...
THE LEGEND OF THE KANSAI AREA - SOGA
BEFORE AKAGI FOR TEN YEARS
THE MAN WHO CONTROLLED THE REALM OF UNDERWORLD PLAYING WAS...

AKAGI AND SOGA...!
I THINK AKAGI HAS A GOOD CHANCE
BUT... IF I WAS TO WAGER A GUESS...
I CAN'T TELL YOU... WHICH ONE OF THEM WILL COME OUT ON TOP, BUT...
THEY'RE TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT KINDS OF GENIUS.
ドン...
ハ・・・ハッ・・・

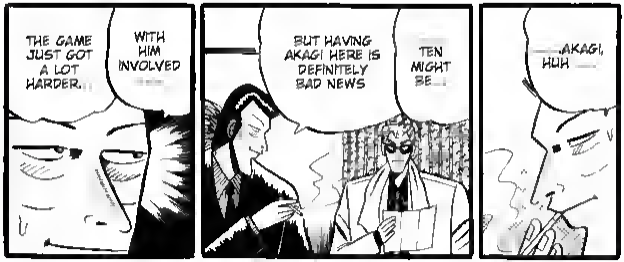
HEY
TEN
SORRY ABOUT BEING LATE
OH DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
BUT WEST'S GETTING STUPID, AREN'T THEY?
RIGHT?
BRINGING
THAT KIND OF SENILE OLD FOOL INTO THIS
TEN
HEH HEH

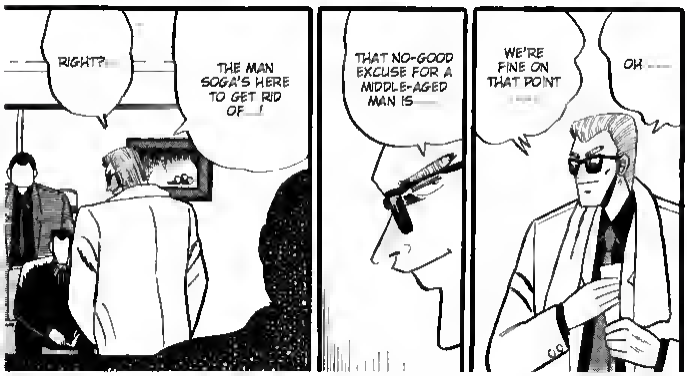
PUT ME IN FOR THE FIRST ROUND.
BECAUSE IT'S DRAWN AT RANDOM BUT……
I DON'T KNOW HOW IT'LL TURN OUT…
AS FAR AS THE FIRST ROUND GOES… I CAN PUT YOUR NAME IN——…
LET ME AND SOGA FIGHT IT OUT——!

THERE'S HEAVY CLOUDS BLOWING OUR WAY...
NO WAY TO SAY HOW THE QUALIFYING ROUND WILL TURN OUT...
I GIVE UP...
THEN... GO AHEAD AND DO IT.
OH REALLY...
ざわ...
A HEAVY BATTLE FROM THE VERY FIRST GAME...!
IN THE GAME THAT STARTS EVERYTHING...
BOTH SIDES WILL BE FIRING THEIR BIG GUNS, AKAGI AND SOGA...!

WEST CAMP
WE'VE GOT THE LIST OF EAST'S MEMBERS
HEH HEH
NOTHING THAT GREAT
KIDS AND WASHED-UP OLD MEN
IT'LL BE AN EASY VICTORY
THE ONLY ONES TO WATCH FOR ARE TEN AND AKAGI

NANGOU FROM KYUSHU
AKUTSU FROM SANIN


THE GAME JUST GOT A LOT HARDER...
WITH HIM INVOLVED
BUT HAVING AKAGI HERE IS DEFINITELY BAD NEWS
TEN MIGHT BE...
...AKAGI, HUH


RIGHT?
THE MAN SOGA'S HERE TO GET RID OF...!
THAT NO-GOOD EXCUSE FOR A MIDDLE-AGED MAN IS
WE'RE FINE ON THAT POINT
OH

PH...
ゴボッ
I'LL LEAVE AKAGI UP TO YOU...!
I'LL TAKE OUT TEN.
THE ACHIEVEMENTS I'D BUILT UP OVER THOSE TEN YEARS... TURNED INTO TRASH
WHEN HE SHOWED UP
ゴボッ
ゴボッ
TEN YEARS.
THAT... LITTLE PUNK...
I'M DYING, BUT I'M NOT DEAD YET.
THE WAY I AM NOW
I'M GOING TO FINISH THIS
I PROBABLY DON'T HAVE MUCH LONGER...
ゴボッ

THAT I'M HERE TO DESTROY!
AKAGI'S THE ONLY ONE

THREE HOURS LATER
KEN
ONE MORE HOUR UNTIL THE SHOW-DOWN
THE GROUPS FOR THE FIRST GAME HAVE BEEN DECIDED
YOU AND I ARE AT THE SAME TABLE
SO FIRST OFF, WE'RE THE TWO EAST MEMBERS AT TABLE "A"

AND WEST—?
...WE GOT SOME STRONG PLAYERS RIGHT AT THE START...
NANGOU FROM KYUSHU AND...
THE GENERAL OF THE OPPOSING SIDE

YEAH
HARADA KATSUMI?

WE'LL JUST GO WITH WHATEVER GETS THROWN AT US!
WELL... I DON'T KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING TO END UP BUT...

THEY SAY... HE'S THE BEST ON WEST'S SIDE AT PRESENT...
EVEN THOUGH SOGA IS EXCEPTIONAL...

IF THEY'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION AND THINGS GO AT OUR PACE...
WHY... IT'S NOT LIKE WE KNOW HOW THIS HAN-CHAN COULD TURN OUT...

A CHANCE AT WINNING
?
OH REALLY, HARADA HUH.....!
HIRO-YUKI
I'M SORRY BUT
DON'T TRY ANYTHING THIS GAME
I REALLY AM LUCKY!
HUH?

WHA...
EVEN IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE, YOU PROBABLY WON'T GO BELOW ZERO POINTS IN THE FIRST COUPLE ROUNDS...
JUST PLAY BY MATCHING WHAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE DISCARDED
DON'T EVEN MAKE A HAND! GIVE UP ON WINNING FROM THE START!
IT'LL BE FINE!
WHAT... YOU JERK...!
THE ONE THING I WANT TO SAY IS...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
QUIT SCREWING AROUND!
JUST DO IT...!
THERE'S NOT A SINGLE ONE...
OUT OF THE MAHJONG PROS THAT ARE GATHERED HERE TONIGHT
THAT WE COULD WIN AGAINST BY GOING AT OUR OWN SPEED...

IT'S NOT LIKE WE COULD EVER WIN AGAINST THEM BY GOING OUR OWN SPEED!
AND THE OPPONENTS WE GOT ARE HARADA, WHO'S THE BEST RIGHT NOW, AND NANGOU, WHO THEY SAY IS THE BEST IN KYUSHU.....!
WE'RE THE LOWER-CLASS TWO IN OUR GROUP
WITHOUT A DOUBT.....!
YOU AND I WILL FINISH NEATLY IN 3RD AND 4TH PLACE.....
THE ONLY WAY TO TAKE THAT MAN OUT IS WITH A SURPRISE ATTACK!
PLEASE!
AND THAT'S WHY I'M TELLING YOU TO STAY STILL AND NOT TRY ANYTHING THAT COULD GET IN MY WAY.....!
SO THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO DO IT.....!
SURPRISE ATTACK.....?
THAT'S RIGHT

IS THE CHANCE TO TURN MY LIFE AROUND THAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR SINCE I LEFT MIDDLE SCHOOL
AND I'M UP AGAINST HARADA IN THE VERY FIRST GAME...
THIS EAST-WEST BATTLE RIGHT NOW
SO YOU PROBABLY DON'T UNDER-STAND, BUT
YOU'RE IN UNIVERSITY
I'LL RISE UPWARDS!
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH THAT'S WORTH
IF I CAN TAKE OUT THE LEADER OF WEST
I'LL TAKE HARADA OUT!
FROM LIVING LIKE TRASH

CHAPTER 32
PREDICTION OF GLASS

A FIGHT BETWEEN SELECT ELITE FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO DECIDE JUST WOULD BE ON TOP.
THE EAST-WEST SHOW-DOWN

BETWEEN MEN WHO HAD NEVER KNOWN DEFEAT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE TERRITORIES
FIRST, THE QUALI-FYING ROUND

THREE OF THEM WILL BE OUT!

IN THE COURSE OF ONE HAN-CHAN BARELY AN HOUR...

TABLE "B":
SOGA,
AKUTSU,
WASHIO,
AND
KANAMITSU.

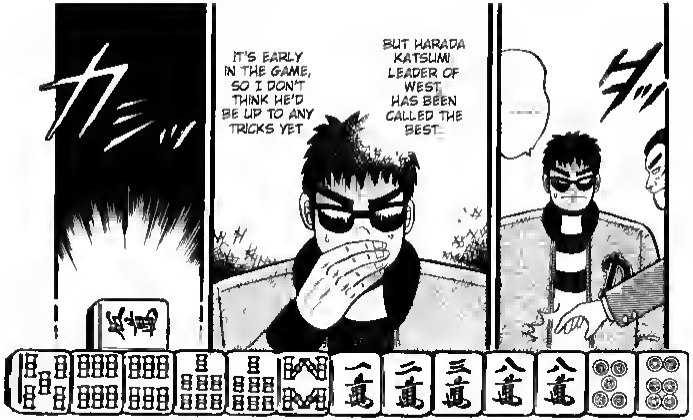
TABLE "C":
SAKAGUCHI,
MITSUI,
AKAGI,
AND
ASAI GINJI.

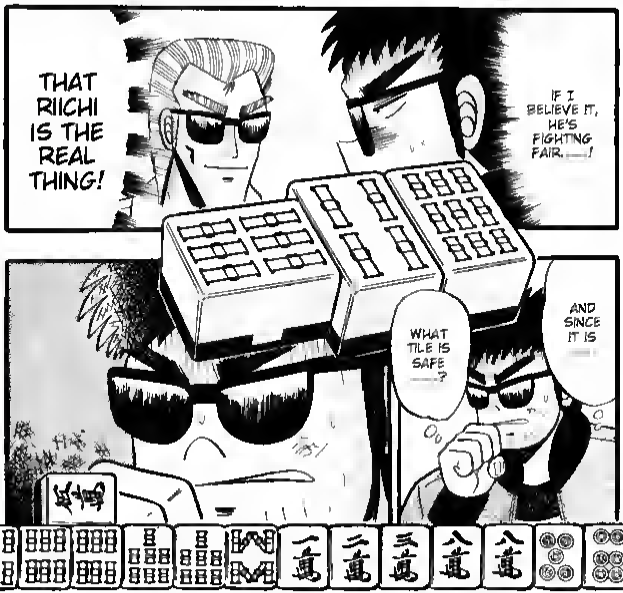
AND TABLE "A": HARADA, NANGOU, KEN AND HIROYUKI.

BUT THE PROBLEM IS TABLE "A"
THEY'VE GOT SOME TROUBLE AHEAD
BY CHANCE, THE RESULTS OF THE LOTS DRAWN ARE BIASED TOWARDS EAST'S STRONGEST MEMBERS AND WE'RE ACTUALLY NOT OVER-SHADOWED BY WEST
"B" AND "C" WILL PUT UP A FIGHT

DESPITE THAT, ONE OF THEM MIGHT TRY SOMETHING
KEN AND HIRO DON'T STAND A CHANCE...
AGAINST HARADA AND HIS MAN
KEN...?!
EAST-WEST BATTLE TABLE "A"
THE MATCH BEGINS.

RIICHI.
EAST 1ST ROUND
HE'S FAST .....
WE'RE BARELY THREE TURNS IN
IS IT A BLUFF ...?

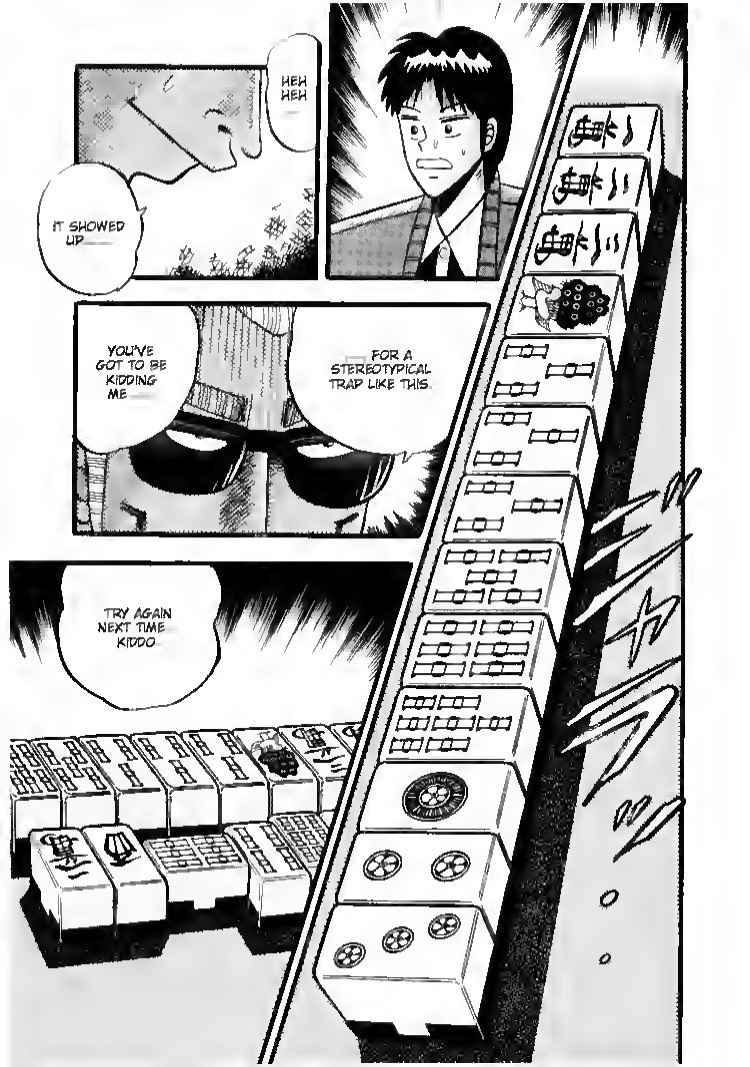

カミッ
IT'S EARLY IN THE GAME, SO I DON'T THINK HE'D BE UP TO ANY TRICKS YET
BUT HARADA KATSUMI LEADER OF WEST HAS BEEN CALLED THE BEST
ダッ
一萬
二萬
三萬
八萬
八萬


THAT RIICHI IS THE REAL THING!
IF I BELIEVE IT, HE'S FIGHTING FAIR...!
WHAT TILE IS SAFE...?
AND SINCE IT IS
一萬
二萬
三萬
八萬
八萬

HIS WAIT IS ON A SOUZU TILE...!
THAT GUY KEN... HE'S PLAYING PRETTY DECISIVELY.
SO... I GUESS OTHER TILES ARE PROBABLY SAFE, BUT.....
MAKING A PREDICTION BASED ON THOSE DISCARDS, I GET A SUSPICIOUS FEELING ABOUT THE SOUZU.
HIROYUKI'S HAND

THIS IS BAD.....
I DON'T WANT TO TAKE TOO MUCH OF A RISK.....!
I UNDERSTAND HARADA'S GOAL SO MUCH THAT IT HURTS...!
OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, WHICH IS AN EASY MARK...
THAT RIICHI IS TO MEASURE THE QUALITIES OF THEIR MAHJONG PLAYING.....!
BUT... HIROYUKI BROKE UP HIS PAIR TO DISCARD A SAFE TILE. HE'S THE TYPE THAT PLACES LOGIC AS A PRIORITY
KEN WENT WITH HIS GUT FEELING, SO HE'S THE TYPE THAT ACTS ON HUNCHES...
ANYONE WOULD INSTANTLY BE SUSPICIOUS OF THE SOUZU TILES...
FROM LOOKING AT THE BIAS TOWARDS SOUZU IN HIS DISCARDS...
GETTING RID OF ALL THE SOUZU IS VERY CONTRIVED

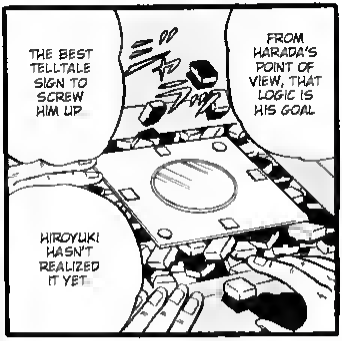
AND WILL ONLY END UP DEALING IN AS NORMAL
HE'LL DISCARD AS NORMAL
WHEN THEY'RE GONE
WHILE IT MIGHT BE A SAFE TILE
THAT NORMAL STYLE OF PLAYING IS THE WORST HERE
6TH TURN
HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY
THIS ONE IS NO-CHANCE
THIS IS THE 4TH 2-SOU
BECAUSE NANGOU DISCARDED ONE OF THESE

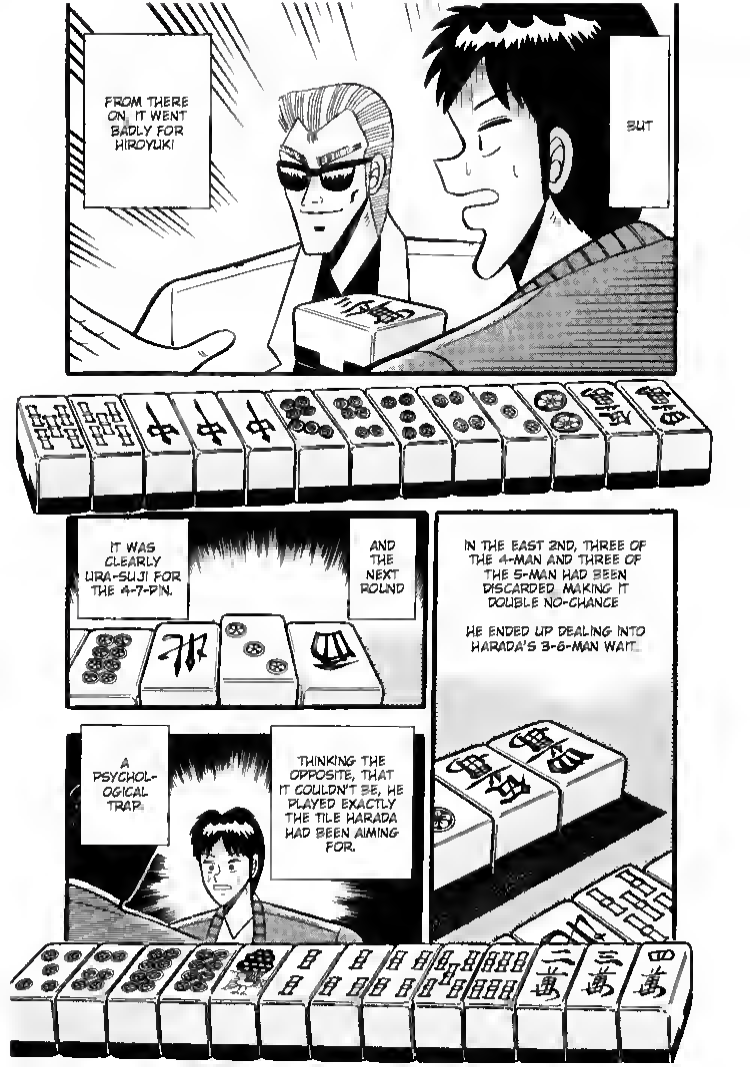

HEH HEH
IT SHOWED UP...
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME...
...FOR A STEREOTYPICAL TRAP LIKE THIS.
TRY AGAIN NEXT TIME KIDDO.

HE HAD A BAD FEELING ABOUT THE SOUZU
BUT HIROYUKI COULDN'T YIELD TO THAT GUT FEELING
AND WENT WITH HIS SENSE OF LOGIC

HIRO-YUKI HAD EVEN FELT IT

HARADA'S JUST TOYING WITH THEM!
THIS HAN-CHAN


FROM HARADA'S POINT OF VIEW, THAT LOGIC IS HIS GOAL
THE BEST TELLTALE SIGN TO SCREW HIM UP
HIROYUKI HASN'T REALIZED IT YET


FROM THERE ON, IT WENT BADLY FOR HIROYUKI
BUT
IT WAS CLEARLY URA-SUJI FOR THE 4-7-PIN.
AND THE NEXT ROUND
IN THE EAST 2ND, THREE OF THE 4-MAN AND THREE OF THE 5-MAN HAD BEEN DISCARDED, MAKING IT DOUBLE NO-CHANCE
HE ENDED UP DEALING INTO HARADA'S 3-6-MAN WAIT.
A PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAP.
THINKING THE OPPOSITE, THAT IT COULDN'T BE, HE PLAYED EXACTLY THE TILE HARADA HAD BEEN AIMING FOR.

THE WORST POSSIBLE TURN OF EVENTS
HE WAS TRAPPED, COMPLETELY AND UTTERLY, IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL NET SET UP BY WEST.
HE'D FALLEN TO 3500 POINTS IN THE SOUTH 1ST ROUND.
HE DEALT INTO THEIR HANDS THREE TURNS IN A ROW AND COUNTING TSUMO TOO
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO INTIMIDATE THE WEST PLAYERS NOW.
HIS LUCK AND HIS RHYTHM ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE LEAVING HIM IN BAD SHAPE
THEY'RE NOT THE NICE KIND OF PLAYERS THAT WILL GIVE IN TO THAT.
HIRO'S DONE FOR.
.....

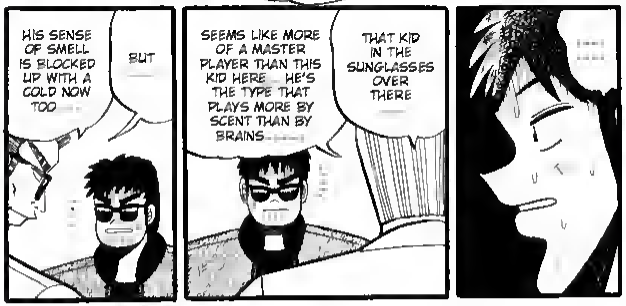
RIICHI!
SOUTH 2ND ROUND
KEN'S HAND
THE ONLY HOPE LEFT IS KEN

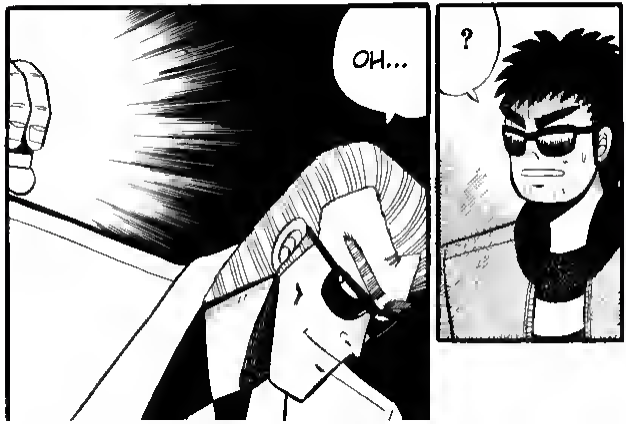
...
I SEE
GOOD DECISION-MAKING AS USUAL
KEN PICKED OUT THAT IT WAS A SOUZU WAIT RIICHI
HE KNOWS MANZU AND PINZU WILL GO THOUGH
HARADA HAS NO WAY TO DEAL WITH DECISIONS MADE ON GUT FEELING LIKE THAT
...
HIROYUKI ----?

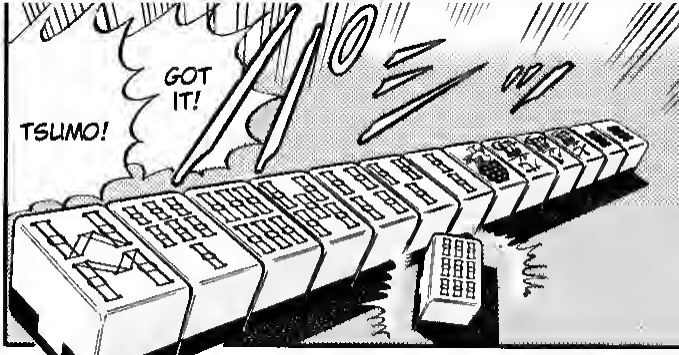
WHICH SHOULD HAPPEN IN ABOUT THREE TURNS.
THAT IS... UNTIL HIS HAND GETS TO TENPAI
HE'S GIVING UP ON HIS HAND COMPLETELY
CHANGE IN HIS HAND
HEH HEH
IF YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING EXCEPT GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR PARTNER...
IF YOU DEAL INTO MY HAND HERE, YOU'RE GOING TO DROP BELOW ZERO
...YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME

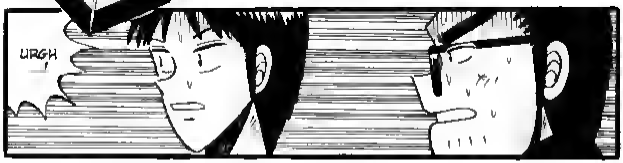
?
I DON'T THINK YOU KNOW WHAT GAMBLING IS
KIDDO...
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SITTING IN THAT SEAT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING
BASICALLY, THINKING UP AN EXCUSE
THINKING OF IT AS LOGICAL IS...
GUYS THAT PLAY LIKE THAT ARE SURE TO GET CAUGHT UP IN A BUNCH OF BAD HABITS
THERE'S NO LOGIC TO GAMBLING...
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR TOO MUCH LOGIC AND MEANING IN THE DISCARDS
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS USE YOUR FAVORITE EXCUSE, USING THE DISCARDS...
TURNS INTO AN EXCUSE FOR WHY YOU DEALT IN LIKE YOU DID
THE LOGICAL EXPLANATION YOU COME UP WITH BEFORE YOU DEAL IN
THAT'S WHY. TO TAKE YOU OUT

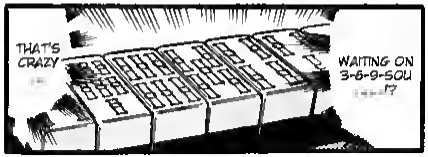
BACK IN EAST 1ST WHEN YOU DEALT INTO MY STRING OF SOUZU DISCARDS AND RIICHI, THAT'S A TYPICAL EXAMPLE
AND BY DOING THAT... YOU GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO PICK OUT AND DISCARD MY WINNING TILE FROM THE 13 TILES YOU HAVE IN YOUR HAND

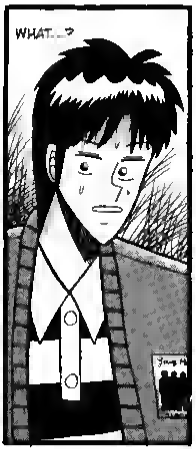

HIS SENSE OF SMELL IS BLOCKED UP WITH A COLD NOW TOO...
BUT
SEEMS LIKE MORE OF A MASTER PLAYER THAN THIS KID HERE... HE'S THE TYPE THAT PLAYS MORE BY SCENT THAN BY BRAINS...
THAT KID IN THE SUNGLASSES OVER THERE...

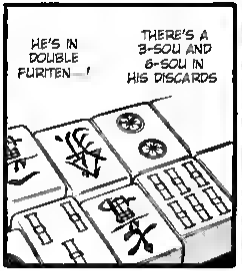

OH...
?


TSUMO!
GOT IT!


URGH...!


THAT'S CRAZY...
WAITING ON 3-6-9-SOU...!?


WHAT...?


HE'S IN DOUBLE FURITEN...!
THERE'S A 3-SOU AND 6-SOU IN HIS DISCARDS

HE'S GOT US FIGURED OUT EXACTLY...!
WHEN IT COMES TO OUR PLAY STYLES

PIN-FU, ITSUU!
HE WAS ONLY GOING FOR TSUMO.
HEH HEH
IN THE END, WE WERE JUST DANCING TO HIS TUNE
I NEVER NEEDED TO BREAK UP MY HAND
AH WELL
IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU PLAY MAHJONG
JUST SWEAT IT OUT AND PLAY THE GAME!

I WAS PLANNING TO PROBABLY SQUEEZE A FEW POINTS FROM THE SUNGLASSES KID HERE BUT
MY WAIT WAS FURITEN FROM THE START...
WASN'T LIKE I NEEDED THOSE POINTS
I KNEW IT BEFORE, BUT NOW I'M SURE WITHOUT USING ANY TRICKS HE'S A LOT BETTER PLAYER THAN US...
AND THE FEELING IN THE AIR...
HE CAN SEE THE TILES IN OUR HANDS...
IT'S LIKE GLASS
WE CAN SEE THIS IS THE WORST TURN OF EVENTS BUT
AT FIRST GLANCE THE ROAD AHEAD OF US IS PITCH-BLACK
ESPECIALLY HIROYUKI, WHO'S DOWN TO 2000 POINTS
MEANWHILE THE TWO OF US WILL DROP OUT
HARADA WILL COME OUT ON TOP - HE'LL RIDE THE FLOW ALL THE WAY UNTIL FINALLY WEST WINS THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

THAT NOW, FINALLY.....
A GHOST OF A CHANCE HAS COME MY WAY.
THIS IS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE BEST POSSIBLE TURN OF EVENTS
IT'S ACTUALLY THE OPPOSITE.....!
SURE PROOF
THAT'S WRONG!
THE WAY HE KEPT ON TALKING LIKE THAT IS GOOD SOLID PROOF.....
IT'S THE FIRST TIME HE DOESN'T SEEM TENSE.....!
FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE GAME STARTED, IT FEELS LIKE HE'S LOOSENING UP...!
A CRACK IN HIS SPIRIT.....!
IT'S A BIT MUCH TO SAY HE'S BEING CARELESS BUT, HE IS LOOSENING UP.

■天TEN④／完